

Ventura County Sheriff's Office
Detention Services
Divisional Policy



Section 12 Chapter 26

Use of Safety Cells/Safety Precaution Levels

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PURPOSE:

To establish policy and procedures for the use of the safety cells in the Detention Services Division. This policy is designed to outline methods of providing temporary, safe and humane housing to hold only those inmates who display behavior which reveals an intent to cause physical harm to self.

DEFINITIONS:

Safety Cell: The padded cells in the Pre-Trial Detention Facility (PTDF) Reception/Booking, in the PTDF Special Housing Section, and the Todd Road Jail (TRJ) Intake Area are specially designed and equipped for inmates who display behavior which reveals the intent to cause physical self-harm.

Intoxicated Person: A person who appears to be, or displays the objective symptoms of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or a combination of both and who appears to be unable to care for his own safety or the safety of other persons.

Mentally Disordered Inmate/5150 W&I: An inmate who appears to be a danger to himself or others or appears to be gravely disabled. Per 5150 W&I, "When any person, as a result of a mental disorder, is a danger to others, or to himself or herself, or gravely disabled, a peace officer, or other professional person designated by the county may, upon probable cause, take, or cause to be taken, the person into custody and place him or her in a facility designated by the county and approved by the State Department of Mental Health at a facility for 48-hour treatment and evaluation."

Custody-initiated Admission (aka Custody Admit): Under directive of the Facility Sergeant to provide safe placement for an inmate whose behavior presents a danger to himself or herself and where other lesser restrictive alternatives were not adequate to provide a safe environment.

POLICY:

I. USE OF THE SAFETY CELL

A. PTDF- Reception/Booking Area and Special Housing Safety Cells:

1. The safety cells at the PTDF may be used in the following cases only with the approval of the Facility Manager, the Facility Sergeant or the designated Medical Staff:
 - a. When an arresting/transporting officer advises the Booking Deputy the inmate he/she is bringing in has attempted or may have the tendency to attempt suicide.
 - b. When it has been determined by the Booking, Security or Classification Deputy that there is a great likelihood of an inmate causing physical self-harm if placed in a regular holding cell or sobering cell.
 - c. When an inmate displays behavior, which results or is likely to result in, or reveals intent to cause physical self-harm.

B. TRJ- Intake Area Safety Cell

1. TRJ Intake Area safety cells will be utilized when an inmate displays behavior, which results or is likely to result in, or reveals intent to cause physical self-harm.
2. TRJ inmates placed in a safety cell will remain at TRJ unless both safety cells are occupied. If this occurs, the inmate will be transported to the PTDF for placement in an available safety cell. This process will be facilitated between to the two facilities' watch commanders.
3. Any time a TRJ safety cell is occupied, a deputy will be staffed in the Intake Area to monitor the inmate and ensure the required monitoring log is maintained. An on-duty Classification deputy shall fill this role in lieu of a regular housing deputy whenever possible.

C. EVJ

1. The use of the Safety Cell at the East Valley Jail is strictly prohibited. Inmates requiring the use of the Safety Cell shall be immediately transported to the Pre-Trial Detention Facility.
2. If the arresting officer is still in the facility, he or she should transport the inmate to the PTDF. If the arresting officer has left the facility, the Facility Supervisor or in his or her absence, a booking deputy, shall notify the PTDF Watch Commander to

arrange immediate transportation for the inmate to the Pre-Trial Detention Facility.

PROCEDURE:

I. PLACEMENT IN A SAFETY CELL

- A. An inmate shall be placed in a safety cell only with the approval of the Facility Manager, Facility Sergeant or the designated Medical Staff.
 - 1. When an inmate is placed in a safety cell, regardless of the reason, a 15-minute monitoring log will be maintained at the inmate's cell.
 - 2. Cell checks should be conducted randomly with no more than 15 minutes between each check.
- B. The Facility Sergeant shall be notified and will ensure a Jail Incident Report (JIR) is completed indicating the reason the inmate was placed into the safety cell. Both the Reception/Housing Deputy and Booking Nurse/Medical Staff shall each write a JIR. A copy of the approved JIRs will be attached to the 15-minute monitoring log that is posted on the inmate's cell door.
- C. Immediately upon placement into the safety cell, the Booking Nurse /Medical Staff will be notified and will respond and check the inmate to determine his/her health condition. This assessment must be done within one hour of being placed in the safety cell. Continued retention in the safety cell will be reviewed every **four hours** by both Medical Staff and the Facility Manager or Facility Sergeant. Both Medical Staff and the Facility Manager or Facility Sergeant will document their findings and reason for continued retention on the monitoring log. This review is intended to remove an inmate from the safety cell as soon as it is safe to do so.
 - 1. The four-hour retention checks by Medical Staff and Facility Sergeant are in addition to, not in lieu of, the 15-minute checks performed by custody staff.
 - 2. Medical Staff will check an inmate in the safety cell whenever requested by custody staff.
- D. An assessment by medical staff shall be completed within a maximum of 12 hours of placement in the safety cell or at the next daily sick call, whichever is earliest. The physician, PA/FNP or RN on sick call, shall

medically clear the inmate for release or continued retention every 24 hours thereafter.

- E. A mental health opinion on placement and retention shall be secured within eighteen (18) hours of placement. Psychiatric staff shall evaluate the inmate every 24 hours thereafter, as long as the inmate remains in the safety cell.
- F. When female inmates are placed in a safety cell, the Facility Sergeant will make every effort to have a female staff member present.
- G. **A safety cell shall never be used for punishment or as a substitute for treatment.**

II. After an inmate has been in a safety cell for six hours, a decision must be made to determine if the inmate should be transported to the hospital for medical treatment. When possible, vital signs should be taken by Medical Staff. The following are examples of when transportation to the hospital would be appropriate:

- Inmate shows no physical or mental improvement
- Inmate continues to deteriorate, behavior escalates, or displays inappropriate bizarre behaviors
- Inmate is unable to take fluids

III. CLOTHING REMOVAL

If an identified risk of suicide exists, custody staff may remove clothing and issue a safety smock. This temporary measure will only remain in place until an evaluation is performed by a qualified mental health professional. Upon completion of the mental health evaluation, the mental health professional will determine whether to continue or discontinue the use of the safety smock.

IV. FOOD, WATER, AND INMATE PROPERTY

- A. Paper plates, foam drinking cups, and a scoop made from a foam cup will be used at meals. Inmates will be given the same portions of food as any other inmate.
- B. No other property will be given to an inmate in a safety cell. When placing the inmate in the safety cell, the deputy should ask the inmate if he/she wants water. Water will also be provided to the inmate upon

request. These requests and the fact that water was given will be documented on the monitoring log.

V. SAFETY PRECAUTION LEVELS

A. Level 1, Maximum Safety Precautions:

Level 1 safety precautions shall be used in circumstances in which an inmate is acutely suicidal. Examples of these circumstances include, but are not limited to; suicide attempts, suicidal ideation with some overt action in furtherance of that ideation, and suicidal ideation with articulation of a very specific and achievable plan.

1. Housed in Safety Cell.
2. A 15-minute monitoring log shall be maintained at the inmate's cell.
3. Inmates may be allowed to retain their blue outer clothing, depending on the situation, and this consideration will be made by the Housing Sergeant or Watch Commander.
4. If all clothing is removed, a safety smock shall be provided. Female inmates on their menstrual cycles may be given undergarments with a menstrual pad.
5. Based on the totality of the circumstances, a safety blanket and safety mattress may also be given.
6. Meals served on paper plates with foam scoops; liquids served in foam cups. No personal property.
7. Attorney/Client visits may be allowed in exceptional situations but only with the Facility Sergeant's approval.
8. In-person, social, non-contact visits may be granted in exceptional situations only with Facility Manager approval. These visits will be coordinated and supervised by the Therapeutic Inmate Management Unit.

B. Level 2, Standard Safety Precautions:

Level 2 safety precautions should be used in circumstances where an inmate articulates suicidal ideation, but has not attempted suicide, taken overt actions of self-harm, or articulated a clear and achievable

plan.

4. Housed in a Special Housing cell or Booking cell at the PTFD or at TRJ in Intake, or Special Use Cells 1 or 2.
2. A 15-minute monitoring log will be maintained at the inmate's cell.
3. Based on the circumstances and compatibility, inmates may be housed together while on Level 2 safety precautions.
4. The inmate will be given a gray blanket and regular mattress
5. The inmate may have toilet paper.
6. Only jail blue shirt and pants will be provided. Undergarments with a menstrual pad are allowed for female inmates on their menstrual cycles.
7. Restriction of dayroom privileges will be determined on a case by case basis.
8. No personal property.
9. Meals served on paper plates with foam scoops; liquids in foam cups.
10. Attorney/Client visits may be allowed in exceptional situations but only with the Facility Sergeant's approval.
11. In-person, social, non-contact visits may be granted in exceptional situations only with Facility Manager approval. These visits will be coordinated and supervised by the Therapeutic Inmate Management Unit.

C. Level 3, Minimum Safety Precautions:

Level 3 safety precautions should be used in circumstances where mental health staff believes the inmate needs a transitional period before returning to standard housing.

1. Housed in Special Housing cell or Booking cell at the PTFD or

at TRJ in Special Use Cells 1 or 2, or Intake.

2. Based on circumstances and compatibility, inmates may be housed together while on Level III safety precautions.
3. The inmate may have personal belongings except for razors, pencils, or other sharp/cutting objects.
4. Inmate privileges restored, including visits and dayroom/roof/recreation yard as deemed appropriate by mental health staff.
5. A 30-minute monitoring log shall be maintained at the inmate's cell.

D. Mandatory Safety Precautions:

1. All inmates sentenced to death or prison terms in excess of 15 years shall be kept under observation in the PTDF Level 1 Control Interview Room or a TRJ Intake interview room, until evaluated by the Booking Nurse or Medical Staff. Medical Staff can make a determination to place the inmate on safety precautions or return the inmate to the housing area.

VI. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- A. The deputy placing an inmate into a safety cell shall be responsible for preparing and submitting the appropriate Jail Incident Report (JIR) within two (2) hours of the placement. A copy of the approved JIR shall be posted on the cell door.
 1. The Security Deputy assigned to the location of the safety cell will maintain inmate monitoring logs. The inmate monitoring log shall contain a record of the times when the condition of the inmate is checked and any remarks made concerning the inmate. Cell checks should be conducted randomly with no more than 15 or 30 minutes between each check (depending on safety precaution level).
- B. At the beginning of each shift, the Level/Housing Senior Deputies will apprise the Facility Sergeant of the safety cell status on their level/housing area. The Facility Sergeant can, at his or her discretion, request evaluation by Medical Staff of an inmate in a safety cell to determine if continued retention is necessary.

VII Release Procedures

- A. If an inmate with a medical-suicidal flag is released from custody, one of the following must occur:
1. A written release must be obtained from the psychiatric/medical staff.
 2. The Level 1 Senior Deputy shall evaluate the inmate.
 - a. The Level 1 Senior Deputy shall interview the inmate prior to release to determine if the inmate meets the criteria of 5150 W&I.
 - b. The Level 1 Senior Deputy shall review the inmate's G.I. (General Information) regarding any suicidal/medical information.
 - c. If the inmate does not meet the criteria of 5150 W&I, the Level 1 Senior Deputy shall have medical staff assist in making an evaluation of an inmate's mental condition.
 - d. The Level 1 Senior Deputy shall document his or her assessment on a Psychological Evaluation Form.
 - e. The Facility Sergeant shall approve the Psychological Evaluation prior to the decision being made on the inmate's release.
 - f. If the inmate meets the criteria of 5150 W&I, the Department approved procedure for commitment to Mental Health shall be adhered to.
- B. Upon removal of the inmate from the safety cell, the monitoring log shall be forwarded to Central Inmate Records for filing in the inmate's jacket.

REFERENCES:

CCR Title 15 Sections 1052, 1055, and 1058;
CCR Title 24 Sections 1013(a), 1013(c) 8