

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY DETENTION FACILITIES

Where They Spend Their Time

SUMMARY

As required by State law, the Grand Jury conducted inspections of the Main Jail, the police departments, Sheriff's Stations and other detention facilities within Santa Barbara County. The Santa Barbara County Main Jail continues to be severely overcrowded, and remains in violation of State law. The need for a new jail is increasingly urgent. The Grand Jury's inspection of all other detention facilities found no obvious issues requiring corrective action.

INTRODUCTION

Under California Penal Code 919(b), the Grand Jury is mandated to inquire into the conditions and management of all detention facilities within the County. The Grand Jury is not the only agency or body that examines these facilities. They are routinely inspected by representatives of the State Board of Corrections, the State Fire Marshal, State health inspectors, and representatives of various other oversight agencies. Areas subject to inspection include:

- the physical layout of the institution
- mental health services
- religious services
- visiting privileges
- meals and nutrition
- physical and dental health services
- volunteer involvement
- educational and vocational opportunities
- programs devoted to victim and gang awareness, substance abuse, and domestic violence

The Grand Jury inspected each of the facilities listed in this report. Deputies, police officials and staff on site were interviewed. Input was received from detainees. All findings were as of the time of the visits. All results reported by the Grand Jury are based on these visits.

Santa Barbara County Detention Facilities

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Main Jail

The Santa Barbara County Main Jail is located at 4434 Calle Real in Santa Barbara. The County Sheriff's Department has been dealing with jail overcrowding since the 1960s. The current facility is 35 years old and in constant need of repair. The Sheriff's Department reports that the average life span of a jail is 30 years. Over half of the sentenced inmates are in Minimum Security or Alternative Programs. A "snapshot" of the Santa Barbara County Main Jail during the month of August 2005 (including male and female inmates) reveals that:

During the month of August 2005:

- More than 55% of the inmate population was from North County.
- There were an average of 36 inmates required to sleep on the floor each night. Mats are placed on the floor of the overcrowded cells in order to provide sleeping space.
- The average daily inmate population increased 7.2% from August 2004.
- The average early release days per inmate were 22 (male), 21 (female).
- There were 2,842 inmates transported between North County (Santa Maria and Lompoc) and the Santa Barbara Main Jail.
- Transportation costs between the North County and the Main Jail were \$16,131.00.
- Minimum Security and Alternative Programs, including Honor Farms, work furlough and electronic monitoring were used to reduce overcrowding.
- The Honor Farms exceeded recommended capacity by over 50%. As a result, increased security upgrades have been necessary to accommodate the mix of classifications that are held there.

At the time of the last inspection by the California Corrections Standards Authority (December 12-15, 2005) the Main Jail was found to be in noncompliance with *Title 24, Section 470A.2.4, Sobering cells* and *Title 24, Section 470A.2.8, Dormitories, 2.9*

Santa Barbara County Detention Facilities

*Dayrooms and 8227, Multiple Occupancy Cells.*¹ These areas of noncompliance are all related to overcrowding and the use of sobering cells for medical and mental health observation.

The Grand Jury finds that the Santa Barbara County Main Jail continues to be overcrowded. The facility, built in 1961, is inadequate to serve the inmate population. Due to overcrowding, some inmates are required to sleep on mats placed on the floor. Inmates are also routinely given an early release or placed on electronic monitoring in order to make room for new offenders. As a result of overcrowding and inmate classifications, staff reports that there has been an increase in assaults at the Main Jail. Increased security has been added to the Honor Farms, which are now housing higher risk inmates. Past Grand Juries have commented on the crowded conditions at the current facility, and have recommended building a new jail in North County. Given the current population growth in the County, the need for a new jail is increasingly urgent. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) has begun to address this situation, and has designated two million dollars toward the initial development of a new North County Jail. Notwithstanding, a critical overcrowding situation remains, and the Grand Jury strongly urges the BOS to continue its efforts to provide a safe and humane jail in which to incarcerate County inmates.

The Main Jail received recognition from the California State Corrections Standards Authority for “Working diligently to resolve crowding issues.”

Detention Facilities

Santa Barbara County detention facilities are under the direction of different agencies: the Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Department, the city police departments, and the Santa Barbara County Probation Department.

The Santa Barbara County detention facilities include:

- Santa Barbara County Main Jail
- Men’s Honor Farm
- Women’s Honor Farm
- Santa Barbara Court Holding Facility
- Lompoc Police Department
- Guadalupe Police Department

¹ Facilities originally designed as sobering cells are currently being used for medical and mental health observation. At the time of the inspection there were 673 inmates, 55 over the rated capacity of 618.

Santa Barbara County Detention Facilities

- Santa Barbara Police Department
- Santa Maria Police Department

Four cities contract with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department for law enforcement services: Carpinteria, Goleta, Buellton, and Solvang. Contract cities pay the Sheriff's Department to enforce the law within their city limits in lieu of establishing their own police departments. These smaller cities benefit from the expertise of a large and experienced department. Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department also provides patrol and support service in unincorporated areas. They are deployed from the following locations:

- Santa Barbara Sheriff's Headquarters
- Coroner's Bureau
- Isla Vista Station
- Cuyama Station
- Lompoc Rucker Road Station
- Buellton Station – Buellton Police Department
- Santa Ynez Station - Solvang Police Department
- City of Carpinteria – Carpinteria Police Department
- Goleta – Goleta Police Department

Santa Barbara juvenile detention centers are under the jurisdiction of the Santa Barbara County Probation Department:

- Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall
- Susan J. Gionfriddo Juvenile Justice Center
- Los Prietos Boys' Camp and Boys' Academy

The Grand Jury commends the Board of Supervisors and the staff at the Susan J. Gionfriddo Juvenile Justice Center for the design, management, and overall development of an outstanding facility in the North County. The Center, which is located in Santa Maria, was dedicated March 3, 2005, and has the capacity for 140 juvenile offenders, and eliminates overcrowding at the Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall.

Santa Barbara County Detention Facilities

FINDINGS

Finding 1

The Santa Barbara Main Jail has been cited by the California Corrections Standards Authority for being out of compliance due to overcrowding.

Finding 2

Inmates are routinely given early release or placed in alternative programs as a result of overcrowding.

Finding 3

Inmates are routinely required to sleep on the floor due to overcrowding.

Finding 4

Main Jail staff reports an increase of violence as a result of overcrowding.

Finding 5

The Board of Supervisors has designated two million dollars toward the initial development of a new North County Jail.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

Property should be purchased for the construction of a North County Jail.

Recommendation 2

Sources of funding for a North County Jail should be secured.

Recommendation 3

A timeline for the purchase of land and the construction of a North County jail should be established.

Santa Barbara County Detention Facilities

REQUEST FOR RESPONSE

In accordance with Section 933(c) of the California Penal Code, each agency and government body affected by or named in this report is requested to respond in writing to the findings and recommendations in a timely manner. The following are the affected agencies for this report, with the mandated response period for each:

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors – 60 days

Findings	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Recommendations	1, 2, 3

Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office – 60 days

Findings	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Recommendations	1, 2, 3