

CORRECTIONS STANDARDS AUTHORITY

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August 31, 2010

Mr. William P. Siffermann
Chief Probation Officer
San Francisco County Juvenile Probation Department
375 Woodside Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94127

Re:

2008/10 Biennial Inspection for the San Francisco City/County Juvenile Detention Facilities pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 209, 885 and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 2002

Dear Chief Siffermann:

On March 23-25, 2010 and May 20, 2010 the Corrections Standards Authority (CSA) staff conducted the 2008-10 biennial inspections of the San Francisco Youth Guidance Center (YGC) and the Log Cabin Ranch.

These facilities were inspected for compliance with the Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities, as outlined in Titles 15 and 24, California Code of Regulations. The inspections consisted of a review of applicable policies and procedures, documentation to verify practices, interviews with staff and detainees and a site visit at each facility.

Enclosed with this transmittal letter are the following documents relative to each facility: summary information sheets identifying each facility and listing any areas of non-compliance; the Title 15 procedures checklists outlining applicable Title 15 sections; the physical plant evaluations outlining Title 24 requirements specific to each facility; and, the living area space evaluations that summarize the physical plant configuration for each facility.

Local Inspections

To obtain an overall view of facility conditions, this report should be reviewed in conjunction with the annual inspections/evaluations required by Title 15, Section 1313, County Inspection and Evaluation of Building and Grounds. The CSA considers an annual inspection current if it occurred the year of or the year prior to the biennial inspection.

Building Safety Inspections: There is a current inspection for both the YGC and Log Cabin Ranch.

Fire and Life Safety Inspection¹: There is a current Fire Inspection for both the YGC and Log Cabin Ranch.

¹ Health and Safety Code Section (HSC) 13146.1 requires fire and life safety inspections.

Health Inspections: The local health inspections address environmental, medical/mental health and nutritional requirements. The Health Inspections are current for both facilities. There were no non-compliance issues cited.

School Program: The San Francisco Office of Education has submitted an annual certification for both facilities.

Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) Inspection: Each facility was inspected by the JJC in 2009.

Juvenile Court Judge Inspection: There is a current inspection report by the Juvenile Court Judge finding the YGC a suitable place to house minors. Pursuant to the Welfare and Institution code Section 209, the Judge of the Juvenile Court shall, at least annually, inspect the Juvenile hall.

See CSA face sheet or policy checklist for specific dates of each inspection.

CSA Inspections

Each facility's policy and procedures manual was reviewed for compliance with Title 15 regulations and discussed with each facility superintendent and their staff. Dennis Doyle (YGC) and Tim Diestel (Log Cabin Ranch) reviewed and updated many areas of the policy and procedure manuals over the last two years (2009, 2010). The policies updated address the required areas of Title 15. Several sections on the CSA policy and procedure checklist reflect updates for both facilities.

The education program at both of the facilities is provided by the San Francisco City/County Office of Education. The education programs typically exceed the minimum minutes per day. A wide variety of classes are offered and geared toward detainees obtaining a high school diploma. Both education programs are rich with services and with the small class size greatly enhance the learning potentials. The school program is focused to provide as normalized school experience as possible. Both facilities deliver education in a centralized model where all the minors attend school in the same area.

Since the last inspection cycle the education program has extended its hours significantly for the summer school session in order to remain consistent with the Education Code of California section 48645.3. The Education Code states "*juvenile court schools shall not be closed any weekday of the calendar year, except those weekdays adopted by the board of education as school holidays or set aside by the board of education for inservice purposes*". As this was a concern the last inspection cycle, it is not a compliance issue this inspection cycle provided the department continues to offer a school schedule consistent with the Education Code.

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act Compliance Monitoring

The JJDP Act prohibits status offenders from being held in secure detention with certain exceptions, and also prohibits contact between minors and adult inmates. The Youth Guidance Center and the Log Cabin facilities do not hold Welfare and Institutions Code 601, Status Offenders.

Youth Guidance Center

On the day of the inspection there were 118 detainees in custody; including 15 females.

Physical Plant

Facility construction was completed in December 2006. The facility is located on the site with the Probation Department's headquarters; on the same site as the previous juvenile hall (construction was done in two phases.). The facility falls under the 1998 standards that were in place at the time of original construction. There are eight living units; 7 with a rated capacity of 20; and one with a rated capacity of 10. Each housing room is equipped with a combo-unit with a toilet, sink, and drinking fountain. The facility features a centralized school program with five classrooms and the gym centered around a sub-control station. Units 7 and 8 have small classrooms on the unit. The rated capacity is 150.

Health Services

Every detainee is screened by medical upon intake. A complete physical is completed usually within 24 hours of intake, 72 hours at most. Care is taken to ensure vaccines are up to date. Dental services are available 2-3 days per week. Every detainee who has a dental issue noted at the medical screen has the opportunity to see the on-site dentist. Minors detained at the Log Cabin ranch also visit the dentist at the juvenile hall.

Policies, Programs, and Practices

During the last inspection cycle it was evident facility operations were still adjusting to the new facility. However, during this inspection it was evident many changes have been made that are more consistent with how a facility of this design should work. It is clear with policy change and training, staff is much more comfortable with operations and even appeared to be relaxed while working in the units.

One major change that is currently being practiced is the detailed documentation of the juvenile's movement throughout the facility. All of the housing units were visited during the inspection and there is a clear account for each minor and their location within the facility. In the event a minor was in his or her room during classroom hours staff could identify why the minor was in the room opposed to attending school. Typically the minor was just received, pending a medical appointment, court appearance, probation interview or involved in a school suspension or disciplinary process. Further, the department is working with the education program staff to institute suspensions from class rather than relying on probation staff to hold minors from the classroom due to disciplinary reasons. Title 15 Section 1390-Discipline, does not allow education to be withheld for disciplinary reasons. It is clear minors should not be held out of the classroom for discipline for an incident that occurred outside the classroom. The practice currently in place does not typically allow for a minor to be held out of class unless an incident occurred during class and a suspension process follows initiated by education staff.

In the occasional event a minor has behavior problems outside of class and probation staff deems it necessary to hold a minor from class (for the safety of the minor, other minors and staff) it is normally for a very short period of time. Staff typically interviews the minor before morning class and afternoon class in an attempt to integrate the minor back in the school program as soon as possible.

Staffing availability and deployment appeared to be sufficient during our inspection. Having the ability to identify the number of staff and actual deployment of the staff assigned is a great improvement since the last inspection cycle.

The department is now operating in a manner more consistent with the design of the facility which requires the staff to move minors directly from the housing unit or classroom. The smooth operation that now exists is a significant reflection of the improved documentation and accountability of each minor. As mentioned above staff appears much more relaxed and confident in their duties.

One practice that was discontinued since the last inspection cycle is the use of Unit 8 as a staging area. During the last inspection cycle Unit 8 was staffed, opened, and operated during week days. It was used as a holding unit of sorts for detainees that were scheduled for court, medical, or interviews. This practice seemed to further accentuate the inefficiencies of the staff deployment because there was still a significant amount of traffic in and out of the units during the day. This practice also compounded the problem of accountability for each minor as there was no documentation that kept track of the minor's whereabouts at any given time. These concerns have been corrected by the closure of Unit 8 for this purpose and all minors are moved from their unit or classrooms accordingly. This new practice frees up staff that would normally be assigned to Unit 8 five days a week.

As mentioned above the documentation of daily activities and movement of minors has greatly improved. Daily activities must be clearly documented by first, a practical daily schedule and second, daily activity logs. Staff has developed schedules (a few different forms) that clearly identify the daily activities in each unit. It is recommended that the department identify one schedule format and use it. Using one format allows staff to be familiar with the schedule no matter what unit they are assigned to.

The documented safety checks have also improved. In reviewing the documentation and observing staff practice, staff understand that checks are much more effective when done randomly. The staff is documenting their checks and it appears the checks are completed on a more random basis rather than exactly on the hour or half hour (0900, 0930, 1000, etc.).

During the review of the discipline process it appeared this area was greatly improved upon also. The correct steps were documented and complete to meet the requirements of due process when addressing discipline. Several disciplinary packets were reviewed during the inspection cycle.

The classification, use of force, segregation and grievance policies have been updated and modified since the last inspection cycle. While practice was not an issue with most of these categories, it is a regulation requirement that departments have written policy which allows departments to enforce practice. The grievance procedure has also improved significantly since the last inspection cycle. New staff has been hired to ensure grievances are handled in a timely manner. Further, several grievances were reviewed and it is clear there is an appeals process in place and proper steps are taken to ensure minors' complaints are heard and addressed in a timely manner within Title 15 regulations.

Log Cabin Ranch

On the day of the inspection there were 12 males in custody. Since the last inspection cycle the department has implemented the Missouri Model. Several minors were interviewed during the inspection. Two youth along with probation staff escorted me around the facility. The appearance of the grounds and facility was impressive.

It is clear many changes have occurred since the last inspection cycle, as staff appeared much more relaxed and confident in their duties. The staff interviewed clearly demonstrated a career interest with the services provided to the youth in this program.

The housing areas have been transformed to meet the Missouri Model approach. The dorm area has been painted, carpeted and furniture has been added to accommodate a more home like environment. The work and goals of the minors are displayed on the walls of their living areas for constant reinforcement of what they learn each day and what their goals are.

Physical Plant

The Log Cabin Ranch is located in the secluded wooded area of La Honda in San Mateo County. Originally constructed in 1940, it has one large dormitory, a dining hall, 7 classrooms, and a recreation and activity room. It falls under the pre-1998 standards. The rated capacity is 84.

Policies, Programs, and Practices

The minors interviewed at the ranch reported a close supportive relationship with the staff, as well as the other detainees. The average age of the detainees is 17.5. A recent high school graduation ceremony was held in June 2010 at which several ranch detainees received diplomas. The youth interviewed spoke of the programming and the outstanding relationship between staff and youth. They appeared excited about how the program was working and that staff and youth both were held accountable in the Missouri Model. We were able to see many projects the youth were working on or completed. The projects ranged from building wooden furniture, masonry, to growing fruits, vegetables, flowers and plants. Parts of the grounds were landscaped by the youth and all upkeep is done by the youth. It was clear the youth had received training regarding job interviews and professional conduct. The two minors who escorted me spoke in a professional and articulate manner. Their communication skills and respect were impressive and greatly appreciated.

The documented safety checks appeared thorough and complete. Many policies have been updated since the last inspection cycle in order to gain compliance with Title 15. As previously mentioned, policy and procedure was updated for the grievance process which ensures Title 15 requirements are met.

Compliance Issues

Youth Guidance Center

None.

Log Cabin Ranch

None

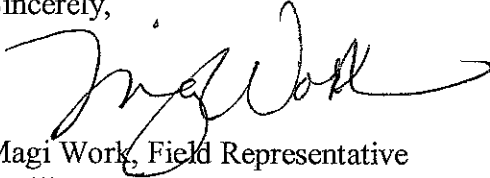
Corrective Action Plan

None required.

This concludes the report for the 2008/10 biennial inspection cycle. It should be noted the amount of work and dedication that has been committed to the improved operations of both facilities.

I would like to specifically thank Toni Powell, Dennis Doyle, Luis Recinos, Earl Hogue, and Tim Diestel for their cooperation and tireless efforts in improving overall operations. The staff did not hesitate to answer CSA's request and prepare for the inspection process, without their cooperation we could not have performed a comprehensive inspection of your department. The dedication and commitment is a direct reflection of the leadership at the San Francisco Probation Department. If I can be of any assistance in the future please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Magi Work, Field Representative
Facilities Standards and Operations Division

Attachments

cc: President of the Board of Supervisors, County of San Francisco*
Mayor, City and County of San Francisco*
Presiding Juvenile Court Judge, County of San Francisco *
Chair, Juvenile Justice Commission City and County of San Francisco *
President of the Probation Commission *
Toni Powell, Director, YGC
Earl Hogue, Director, Log Cabin Ranch

*Copies of the full inspection are available upon request.