



Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Audit of Detention By Maricopa County Internal Audit October 2022

Why This Audit Is Important

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) Custody Bureau oversees the care and custody of the inmate population 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Thousands of inmates go through the county's five detention facilities where detention officers provide daily necessities to those awaiting court and those who stay in custody after sentencing.

We performed this audit to (1) gain an understanding of MCSO's inmate supervision methods and detection of inmate-related incidents, and (2) determine if safety inspections, headcounts, and security walks are conducted in accordance with federal requirements and MCSO policy, as applicable.

Key Observations

- MCSO's inmate supervision methods vary, ranging from direct supervision to remote surveillance, depending on facility design, inmate risk levels, and available staffing resources.
- Mandated safety inspections can be improved by implementing periodic validation of inspections and documentation, and updating refresher training to include all required federal standards.
- Headcounts and security walks are generally conducted as required; procedures for communicating missed or late headcounts and security walks need updating.

All key findings requiring corrective action were addressed through agreed-upon management action plans.

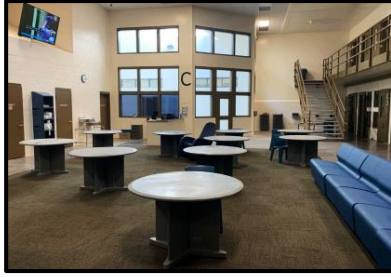
What We Audited

Following is a summary of work performed and recommendations. The responses were approved by Russ Skinner, Chief Deputy, on October 3, 2022. We also communicated detailed observations and recommendations to management throughout the audit process.

Inmate Supervision

Background – Inmate supervision is key to jail safety and security. MCSO has different supervision methods that vary by custody level and housing assignment within each jail. The Inmate Classification Division determines the custody level and housing assignment for each inmate. We conducted interviews and reviewed documentation to gain an understanding of MCSO's inmate supervision methods used within each jail location.

Observations – MCSO utilizes three primary inmate supervision methods, including: 1) direct supervision, 2) intermittent supervision, and 3) remote surveillance. Direct supervision is used



in some dormitory and podular-style housing units where a detention officer is stationed inside each housing unit. The officer has frequent contact with and continuous in-person supervision over inmates. Intermittent supervision is typically accomplished through periodic security checks, headcounts, and other activities in a traditional jail setting with podular-style housing units. Remote surveillance monitors inmate activity from a secure control room.

Most of MCSO's housing units are supervised using a combination of intermittent supervision and remote surveillance. Direct supervision is the preferred method where security and inmate risk levels allow but is limited in use due to staffing challenges and facility design.

Inmate Incident Detection

Background – While security walks and headcounts are important components of MCSO's inmate supervision, these periodic checks do not always detect and identify incidents in real time. We conducted interviews and reviewed documentation to understand how MCSO detects inmate incidents so that response procedures can be enacted timely. We focused our attention on MCSO's remote surveillance methods, with emphasis on understanding the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras.

Observations – MCSO's use of CCTV cameras helps ensure the safety of detention officers and other staff while they are inside housing units. It also assists in monitoring inmate activity and serves as evidence preservation. Generally, housing control room officers are responsible for monitoring activities using CCTV cameras. Additional observations include:

- Cameras are generally fixed as to angles and coverage. Legal restrictions limit some CCTV cameras use due to inmate privacy laws.
- A housing control room officer may be responsible for monitoring as many as 150 inmates in multiple pods and have between 8 and 64 CCTV views on the screen(s) at any given time, depending on the facility's size and population.
- Housing control room officers:
 - Have numerous duties that can vary by jail; there is no expectation that housing control room officers watch/observe inmates via CCTV at all times.
 - Are subject to supervision by shift supervisors, but expectations for CCTV camera duties and training are not specified in policies or manuals.



The Board of Supervisors approved a project budget for the design phase of MCSO's camera system upgrade. An outside firm recently completed an assessment, and a design proposal is planned to be completed by calendar year end.

Safety Inspections

Background – The federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) requires jails to have a policy and practice of having supervisors conduct and document unannounced inspections to identify and deter sexual abuse and/or harassment. To comply with federal requirements, MCSO’s PREA policy establishes inspection and documentation requirements. We reviewed documentation for a sample of PREA safety inspections to determine if inspections were conducted in accordance with MCSO policy. We also reviewed online PREA refresher training provided to detention staff.

Observations – We found that MCSO meets the federal requirements for unannounced inspections, but compliance with its own policy needs improvement. PREA safety inspection compliance varied widely by jail. We noted documentation is inconsistent across jails and MCSO policy needs updating to match current operations. We also found that the PREA refresher training needs to be updated to include all required federal PREA elements.

Recommendations to MCSO	Response
Implement periodic validations of PREA safety inspections and documentation, to be performed by jail command staff or other appropriate parties (e.g., PREA Unit).	Concur – in progress After the PREA Safety Inspection is completed, and prior to the end of shift, the lieutenant or command officer shall document the PREA Safety Inspection in Blue Team, as a Line Level Inspection utilizing the “LLI-PREA Safety Inspection” allegation. The MCSO PREA Coordinator will regularly audit the completion of PREA Safety Inspections through Blue Team in coordination with the Bureau of Internal Oversight (BIO). Target Date: 3/1/2023
Update online PREA training to incorporate all elements required by federal PREA standards.	Concur – will implement with modifications MCSO PREA Unit to work with Training to update curriculum to cover all pertinent PREA information. Training update may require Monitor approval, may need extended timeline. Target Date: 10/1/2023

Headcounts and Security Walks

Background – MCSO performs headcounts and security walks as part of its inmate supervision strategy. These activities help ensure the safety, well-being, and accounting of inmates. ID headcounts involve verifying that each inmate is accounted for, while a general headcount is simply a body count. Two ID headcounts and one general headcount are required for each shift. Security walks are a visual observation, required at least every 60 minutes, focusing on the safety and security of the inmates.

Observations – We examined shift log data, verified documentation, and reviewed surveillance footage for a sample of headcounts and security walks to confirm compliance with MCSO policy. We found:

- 2 ID headcounts and 1 general headcount were documented for nearly all shifts reviewed; most were completed on time. Some headcount shift log entries were incorrectly labeled (e.g., general headcount was actually an ID headcount).
- All security walk log entries were verified from surveillance footage; nearly all were conducted on time.



Required memos for late or missed headcounts and security walks were not on file. However, we noted that supervisors need to be notified promptly for late or missed walks while they have time to ensure the work is completed. A formal memo may no longer be the best way to do so.

Recommendation to MCSO	Response
Update notification and documentation requirements for missed or late headcounts and security walks to ensure prompt notification to shift supervisors and adequate documentation in MCSO systems.	<p>Concur – will implement with modifications</p> <p>Documentation will be done through adding a dropdown to the Blue Team application (not SHIELD). This will allow tracking and alerts for patterns. Policy will need to be updated accordingly.</p> <p>Target Date: 7/1/2023</p>

Additional Information

This audit was authorized by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors and was conducted in conformance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. This report is intended primarily for the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors. However, this report is a public record, and its distribution is not limited. If you have any questions about this report, please contact Mike McGee, Internal Audit Director, at 602-506-1585.