

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT



**SAFETY CHECKS AUDIT
COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU
2018-11-A**

**JIM McDONNELL
SHERIFF**

November 1, 2018

LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
Audit and Accountability Bureau

SAFETY CHECKS – COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU
Project No. 2018-11-A
AUDIT REPORT

PURPOSE

The Audit and Accountability Bureau (AAB) conducted the Safety Checks Audit, Court Services Division – West Bureau under the authority of the Sheriff of Los Angeles County. The audit was performed to determine how the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Department), Court Services Division – West Bureau (CSD West Bureau)¹ adhered to the Department's Court Services Manual (CSM).

The AAB conducted this audit under the guidance of Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards.² The AAB determined the evidence obtained was sufficient and appropriate to provide a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives.

BACKGROUND

The CSM was established to govern the operations of Department court lockups, administration, bailiff positions, security assignments, and civil procedures. Sworn personnel and custody assistants assigned to Court Services are responsible for the safety and security of the persons in their custody. The CSD West Bureau is responsible for inmates who are transported to and temporarily housed in their court holding facilities (lockups) pending their judicial proceedings.³

Title 15, Section 1005, Other Standards and Requirements states, "a city or county agency operating a local detention facility is not prohibited from adopting standards and requirements governing its own employees and facilities; provided such standards and requirements meet or exceed, and do not conflict with, these standards and requirements." The Department's CSM policy requires safety checks shall be made and documented at least every thirty (30) minutes. A safety check shall be made every

¹ Court Services Division – West Bureau courthouses audited were: Airport, Michael D. Antonovich Antelope Valley, Inglewood, Lancaster Juvenile Justice Center, Governor George Deukmejian, San Fernando, Santa Clarita, Sylmar Juvenile, Torrance, and Van Nuys West.

² United States Government Accountability Office – By the Comptroller General of the United States, Government Auditing Standards, December 2011.

³ The California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 15 defines a court holding facility as a local detention facility within a court building used for the confinement of persons solely for the purpose of a court appearance for a period not to exceed 12 hours (CCR, Title 15, §1006). For the purposes of this audit, the term "lockup" is interchangeable with "court holding facility."

SAFETY CHECK AUDIT – COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU

Project No. 2018-11-A

fifteen (15) minutes when a cell contains other than general population inmates, such as minors, mentally ill inmates, or high risk inmates.⁴

Personnel assigned to CSD West Bureau are responsible for the safety and security of inmates while awaiting their judicial appearance. A component of ensuring inmates' safety and security is the safety check. According to the CSM, safety checks consist of observing inmates for signs of life and/or obvious signs of distress. The Supervising Line Deputies and the Branch Supervisors⁵ are responsible for the overall operation of each lockup.⁶ The four Area Lieutenants assigned to the four regional areas within CSD West Bureau are responsible for the overall management of assigned courthouses and lockups within the bureau. Each lockup is equipped with a video monitoring system.

PRIOR AUDITS

This audit was the first Court Services Division Safety Checks audit conducted by the AAB. An Inmate Safety Check audit was conducted at the South Patrol Division (Project No. 2016-11-A) and the audit recommendations are being addressed by South Patrol Division. An Inmate Safety Check audit was conducted at Century Regional Detention Facility (Project No. 2017-3-A) and all audit recommendations have been implemented. An Inmate Safety Check audit was conducted at the Twin Towers Correctional Facility (Project No. 2018-3-A) in which audit recommendations are being addressed by Custody Services Administration Command.

METHODOLOGY

Scope

This audit encompassed four main objectives:

- Safety Checks – To determine if required safety checks were conducted and documented as required by the CSM.
- Supervisor's Responsibility – To determine if the Supervising Line Deputy (Senior), Branch Supervisor (Sergeant), and Area Lieutenant conducted and documented safety checks in accordance with the CSM.

⁴ The CSM, Section 2-06/020.00, Routine Safety Checks, September 2018.

⁵ For the purposes of this audit a Branch Supervisor is of the rank of sergeant.

⁶ The CSM, Section 2-01/030.00, Organization, September 2018.

SAFETY CHECK AUDIT – COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU

Project No. 2018-11-A

- Record Keeping – To determine if the Uniform Daily Activity Log record books were retained at the facility for a period of five years, in accordance with the CSM.
- Recording Inspections – To determine if Title 15 Cell/Inmate Inspection forms were posted on cells in accordance with the CSM.

Auditors retrieved the Safety Check forms⁷ from each CSD West Bureau courthouse. The Safety Check forms are used to document the visual inspection of inmates within lockups and dedicated satellite lockups.⁸ Auditors attempted to retrieve and review video recordings within the CSD West Bureau to verify if the safety checks occurred. Auditors were unable to verify written or electronic documentation against video recordings due to the limited video retention capabilities.⁹

The Uniform Daily Activity Log (UDAL) is a paper log used to document activities and incidents in the courthouses within CSD West Bureau. The Electronic Uniform Daily Activity Log (e-UDAL) is a computer based electronic log. The e-UDAL is a replacement for the paper logs throughout the CSD West Bureau. Both logs were accessed to measure the Sergeant and Area Lieutenant's documented checks. The UDALs were inspected to measure record keeping compliance. The gradual implementation of the e-UDAL occurred between the years 2015-2016, and is currently the only log used throughout the CSD West Bureau.

Auditors conducted visual inspections of the court lockups to determine if a Cell/Inmate Inspection form was posted on each cell door.

Audit Time Period

The time period was from August 1, 2018, through August 31, 2018. A visual inspection of the Cell/Inmate Inspection Records posted on the cell doors for every lockup and dedicated satellite lockup location. Table No. 1 identifies the date of inspection per courthouse for Objective No. 4 on the following page.

⁷ The CSM, Section 2-06/020.05, Recording Inspections, July 13, 2018. Safety Check forms are also referred to as Title 15 Cell/Inmate Inspection Record, or Cell Check Daily forms.

⁸ Dedicated satellite lockups are cells used to temporarily house inmates in the courthouse other than the main lockup.

⁹ Auditors discovered video recordings were retained for approximately one month and then loop recorded. Loop recording is the process of recording continuously to computer memory, or recording video feeds on a video server.

SAFETY CHECK AUDIT – COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU
Project No. 2018-11-A

Table No. 1 – Date of Inspection

Courthouse	Date	Courthouse	Date
Airport	August 16, 2018	San Fernando	August 21, 2018
Gov. George Deukmejian	August 23, 2018	Santa Clarita	August 21, 2018
Inglewood	August 16, 2018	Sylmar Juvenile	August 11, 2018
Lancaster Juvenile Justice Center	August 28, 2018	Torrance	August 14, 2018
Michael D. Antonovich Antelope Valley	August 28, 2018	Van Nuys West	August 23, 2018

Audit Population

Auditors inspected ten courthouses in CSD West Bureau to establish a list of cells used to temporarily house inmates in main lockups and dedicated satellite lockups. The CSD West Bureau has several civil courts which were not evaluated. Additionally, only one of the three juvenile courts (Lancaster Juvenile Justice Center) temporarily housed minors awaiting court proceedings on the date of the audit inspection.

For Objectives No. 1(a), and No. 1(b), auditors identified 440 cells each requiring 30 minute safety checks. Additionally, auditors identified seven temporary holding cells at Lancaster Juvenile Justice Center requiring 343 scheduled 15 minute safety checks. Auditors randomly selected the 12-hour period of August 15, 2018, for evaluation. A total sample of 537 selections required 30 minute safety checks, and 53 selections required 15 minute safety checks.¹⁰

For Objective No. 2(a), and No. 2(b) auditors evaluated e-UDALs for August 15, 2018. Auditors evaluated the e-UDALs for the required daily Supervising Line Deputy and Branch Supervisor reviews for a total of two required checks per court lockup location.

For Objective No. 2(c), auditors evaluated the week of August 11, 2018 to August 17, 2018. Auditors evaluated e-UDALs for one weekly review by the Area Lieutenant.

For Objective No. 3, auditors identified and evaluated individual UDALs located at CSD West Bureau courthouses. During this audit time period, the necessary retention of UDALs were from 2013-2016.

For Objective No. 4, Auditors conducted a visual inspection of each Cell/Inmate Inspection Record posted on the cell doors for compliance. This information is also captured previously on the initial inspection dates (refer to Table No. 1).

¹⁰ Using a statistical one-tail test with a 95% confidence level and a 4% error rate, a statistically valid sample was identified.

SAFETY CHECK AUDIT – COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU
Project No. 2018-11-A

SUMMARY OF AUDIT FINDINGS

The management and staff at the CSD West Bureau were accommodating and cooperative in providing the necessary information during audit fieldwork and the informal discussion of findings. The CSD West Bureau achieved varied results for the objectives. The results of the audit are summarized below in Table No. 2.

Table No. 2: Summary of Audit Findings

Objective No.	Audit Objectives	Met the Standard
1	SAFETY CHECKS	
1(a)	SAFETY CHECKS	
	<i>Determine if safety checks were made and documented at least every thirty (30) minutes.</i>	49%
1(b)	SAFETY CHECKS – MINORS	
	<i>Determine if safety checks were made and documented at least every fifteen (15) minutes.</i>	17%
2	SUPERVISOR’S RESPONSIBILITY	
2(a)	SUPERVISING LINE DEPUTY (SENIOR)	
	<i>Determine if the Supervising Line Deputy (Senior) visited each lockup area not less than twice per shift to review, and audit the Uniform Daily Activity Log (UDAL). The senior shall note the time and sign the log.</i>	0%
2(b)	BRANCH SUPERVISOR (SERGEANT)	
	<i>Determine if the Branch Supervisor (Sergeant) visited each lockup area not less than twice per shift to review, and audit the UDAL. The sergeant shall note the time and sign the log.</i>	10%
2(c)	AREA LIEUTENANT	
	<i>Determine if the Area Lieutenant visited each lockup area at least one time per week to review, and audit the UDAL. The lieutenant shall note the time and sign the log.</i>	60%
3	RECORD KEEPING	
	<i>Determine if all UDAL books were maintained at the facility for a period of five years.</i>	98%
4	RECORDING INSPECTIONS	
	<i>Determine if a Cell/Inmate Inspection Record was posted and completed per policy on each cell door whether the room was empty or not.</i>	100%

SAFETY CHECK AUDIT – COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU
Project No. 2018-11-A

Objective No. 1 – Safety Checks

Objective No. 1(a) – Safety Checks

Criteria

Court Services Manual of Policy and Procedures, Section 2-06/020.00, Routine Safety Checks states:

Safety checks shall be made and documented at least every thirty (30) minutes... These safety checks shall not be made at exact intervals. Random checks prevent the development of predictable patterns of behavior on the part of deputy personnel.

Audit Procedures

Auditors reviewed the safety check forms to determine if safety checks were conducted and documented in the CSD West Bureau main lockups and dedicated satellite lockups.

Findings

There were 292 of the 590 (49%) safety checks that met the standard. Of the 590 safety checks, 298 safety checks did not meet the standard because a safety check was not documented or was conducted past 30 minutes.

Objective No. 1(b) – Safety Checks – Minors

Criteria

Court Services Manual of Policy and Procedures, Section 2-06/020.00, Routine Safety Checks states:

...A safety check shall be made every fifteen (15) minutes when a cell contains other than general population inmates, such as minors... These safety checks shall not be made at exact intervals. Random checks prevent the development of predictable patterns of behavior on the part of deputy personnel...

Juvenile safety checks shall be made and logged every fifteen (15) minutes.

Audit Procedures

Auditors reviewed the Safety Check forms for juveniles at the Lancaster Juvenile Justice Center to determine if safety checks were conducted and documented.

SAFETY CHECK AUDIT – COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU
Project No. 2018-11-A

Findings

Nine of the 53 (17%) safety checks met the standard. Of the 53 safety checks, forty-four safety checks did not meet the standard because a safety check was not documented or was conducted past 15 minutes.

The CSD West Bureau achieved varied results for Objective No. 1(a), and No. 1(b). The results of these objectives are summarized in Table No. 3.

The CSM safety check policy utilized for the criteria in Objective No. 1(a) is more restrictive than the Title 15 requirement. These results are also summarized in Table No. 3.

Table No. 3: Summary of Safety Check Compliance

Department Policy 30 Minute Checks (Adults), 15 Minute Checks (Minors)			
Courthouse	Required Checks	Completed Checks	Met the Standard
Airport	77	43	56%
Michael D. Antonovich Antelope Valley	76	37	49%
Inglewood	74	37	50%
Lancaster Juvenile Justice Center*	53	9	17%
Governor George Deukmejian	75	40	53%
San Fernando	64	20	31%
Santa Clarita	36	24	67%
Sylmar Juvenile ¹¹	8	3	38%
Torrance	50	32	64%
Van Nuys West	77	47	61%
Total	590	292	49%

* Lancaster Juvenile Justice Center conducts 15-minute safety checks (minors)

¹¹ On the randomly selected date of evaluation, Sylmar Juvenile court temporarily housed an adult and there were no minors temporarily housed in the juvenile lockup.

SAFETY CHECK AUDIT – COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU
Project No. 2018-11-A

Objective No. 2 – Supervisor’s Responsibility

Objective No. 2(a) – Supervising Line Deputy (Senior)

Criteria

Court Services Manual of Policy and Procedures, Section 2-01/040.05, Uniform Daily Activity Log (UDAL/EUDAL)/Title 15 Log, Supervisors’ Responsibility – Supervising Line Deputy states:

Each Supervising Line Deputy (Senior) shall visit each lockup area under their supervision not less than twice per shift, to review and audit the UDAL, checking for accuracy and completeness...The senior shall note the time of the visit in the UDAL, and sign the log with his first and last name, and employee number.

Audit Procedures

Auditors reviewed the e-UDALs for August 15, 2018, to determine if the supervising line deputies electronically signed the log not less than twice per shift. It should be noted at the time of this evaluation, the UDAL log books were converted to e-UDALs.

Findings

None of the ten (0%) e-UDAL reviews and audits of the lockups met the standard for this objective. There was no documentation the Supervising Line Deputies reviewed the e-UDALs.

Objective No. 2(b) – Branch Supervisor (Sergeant)

Criteria

Court Services Manual of Policy and Procedures, Section 2-01/040.05, Uniform Daily Activity Log (UDAL/EUDAL)/Title 15 Log, Supervisors’ Responsibility – Branch Supervisor (Sergeant) states:

Each branch supervisor responsible for lockup shall visit each lockup under their supervision not less than twice per shift to review the UDAL...The sergeant will note the time of the visit in the UDAL, and sign the log with his first and last name, and employee number...

SAFETY CHECK AUDIT – COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU
Project No. 2018-11-A

Audit Procedures

Auditors reviewed the e-UDALs to determine if the sergeants electronically signed the log not less than twice per shift.

Findings

One of the ten (10%) e-UDAL reviews and audits of the lockups met the standard for this objective. Nine of the ten e-UDAL reviews did not meet the standard because there was no documentation the sergeants reviewed the e-UDALs.

Objective No. 2(c) – Area Lieutenant

Criteria

Court Services Manual of Policy and Procedures, Section 2-01/040.05, Uniform Daily Activity Log (UDAL/EUDAL)/Title 15 Log, Supervisors' Responsibility – Area Lieutenant states:

Each area lieutenant shall, on a random basis, review the UDAL in each lockup under their command at least one time per week. The watch commander shall document this review by noting the time and signing the log with his first and last name, and employee number...

Audit Procedures

Auditors reviewed the e-UDALs to determine if the Area Lieutenants electronically signed the logs at least once per week.

Findings

Six of ten (60%) e-UDAL checks met the standard. Four e-UDAL safety checks did not meet the standard because there was no documentation the Area Lieutenants reviewed the e-UDALs.

SAFETY CHECK AUDIT – COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU
Project No. 2018-11-A

Objective No. 3 – Record Keeping

Criteria

Court Services Manual of Policy and Procedures, Section 2-01/040.05, Retention of the Daily Activity Log (UDAL) states:

All Uniform Daily Activity Log (UDAL) books shall be maintained at the facility for a period of five years.

Audit Procedures

Auditors reviewed a combined total of 600 UDAL log books and e-UDALs to determine if the CSD West Bureau retained records for five years.

Findings

There were 585 of the 600 (98%) UDALs and/or e-UDALs that met the standard. Fifteen UDALs had not been retained and did not meet the standard.

Objective No. 4 – Recording Inspections

Criteria

Court Services Manual of Policy and Procedures, Section 2-06/020.05, Recording Inspections states:

Cell/Inmate Inspection Record...shall be posted on each cell door and shall be completed daily. Information on each form shall be in ink and include the name of the court lockup being inspected, date, names of personnel assigned, time each safety check is made, and the initials of the inspecting Deputy. The actual time the safety check is made shall be the time entered on the form. Do not write inspections in advance or pre-print forms with set times and then initial them every 30 minutes...

In the event that interview rooms are used to temporarily house inmates, a Cell/Inmate Inspection Record shall be posted on the door, whether the room is empty or not.

SAFETY CHECK AUDIT – COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU
Project No. 2018-11-A

Audit Procedures

Auditors conducted a visual inspection of the Cell/Inmate Inspection Records posted on the cell doors for every lockup and dedicated satellite lockup location within the CSD West Bureau.

Findings

All of the 447 (100%) Cell/Inmate Inspection Records met the standard.

OTHER RELATED MATTERS

Other related matters are pertinent issues discovered during the audit, but were not objectives which were measurable against Department policies and procedures.

Cell/Inmate Inspection Form

The CSD West Bureau utilized different Cell/Inmate Inspection forms to document safety checks on a weekly basis. Although the forms capture similar information, the forms are not standardized among all the courthouses. Auditors noted safety checks are hand-written and many could not be identified due to illegible documentation.

Cell Identification

Auditors recognized CSD West Bureau cell locations did not have identifying signage at several courthouses. The inability to accurately identify the cell location could result in missed safety checks.

Collection and archiving of safety check forms

Auditors found 26 safety check forms were not archived or were unable to be located. Without the availability of the safety check forms, auditors could not confirm if the safety checks were completed.

Video Camera Recording Systems

Auditors intended to verify the safety checks conducted during the audit time period by reviewing video recordings. However, auditors were informed by subject matter experts at CSD West Bureau that the video camera systems have limited retention capabilities due to the data storage size. At the time of this audit, times and dates of video recording calibration could not be validated. Had the video recordings been validated for review, auditors would verify the safety check video recordings against the cell/inmate inspection forms.

SAFETY CHECK AUDIT – COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU
Project No. 2018-11-A

CONCLUSION

The resulting recommendations coincide with the findings and conclusions from the objectives and other related matters. They are intended to provide Department management with a tool to correct deficiencies and improve performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended the CSD West Bureau re-brief and document the training of the required or mandated safety check policies and procedures to all personnel. (Objective No.'s 1 and 2, and Other Related Matters)
2. It is recommended that personnel conducting safety checks legibly document the time of the safety check. (Other Related Matters)
3. It is recommended the CSD West Bureau install identifying signage at each cell locations. (Other Related Matters)
4. It is recommended the Department consider increasing video retention storage. (Other Related Matters)

View of Responsible Officials

On November 1, 2018, the AAB received the Response Memorandum from the Chief of Court Services Division requesting additional time to conduct an in-depth review of the audit findings to properly identify existing issues and coordinate any corrective action needed. The AAB believes that auditors evaluated the best evidence to support the audit findings and that sufficient opportunity was extended to CSD to respond and refute the audit findings.

A copy of the audit report was provided to the Office of Inspector General.

This space intentionally left blank

SAFETY CHECK AUDIT – COURT SERVICES DIVISION – WEST BUREAU
Project No. 2018-11-A

This audit was submitted on this 1st day of November 2018, by the Audit and Accountability Bureau.

Original signature on file at AAB

DOUG MURAKAMI
Project Manager
Sergeant
Audit and Accountability Bureau
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Original signature on file at AAB

KENJI MASHIKO
Assistant Project Manager
Sergeant
Audit and Accountability Bureau
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Original signature on file at AAB

M. ROWENA NELSON
Head Compliance Officer
Audit and Accountability Bureau
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Original signature on file at AAB

FAYE A. ADRAGNA
Captain
Audit and Accountability Bureau
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department