

TEXAS COMMISSION ON JAIL STANDARDS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Brandon S. Wood



P.O. Box 12985
Austin, Texas 78711
Voice: (512) 463-5505
Fax: (512) 463-3185
<http://www.tcjs.state.tx.us>
info@tcjs.state.tx.us

REMEDIAL ORDER

FROM: Texas Commission on Jail Standards

TO: Lina Hidalgo County Judge
Harris County, Texas
Houston, TX 77002

Sheriff Ed Gonzalez
Harris County
Houston, TX 77002

A special inspection of the Harris County Jail was conducted on September 7, 2022, in response to a complaint. After it was determined inmates had remained in holding cells in excess of 48 hours, Harris County was issued a notice of non-compliance.

A special inspection was conducted on December 12, 2022, as a result of a death in custody. The investigation determined that the Harris County Jail was not following doctor's orders and not following their approved procedures contained within their Health Services Plan regarding the review and provision of prescription medications to inmates and Harris County was issued a notice of non-compliance.

Harris County requested a reinspection in response to the notice of non-compliance dated September 7, 2022, on December 16, 2022.

Harris County requested a reinspection in response to the notice of non-compliance dated December 12, 2022, on January 20, 2023.

A comprehensive reinspection of Harris County Jail was conducted on February 17th, 2023. The inspectors determined that previously identified areas of non-compliance remained and additional areas of non-compliance were identified. A Notice of Non-Compliance was issued to the Harris County Jail. Below are the details.

- Inmates continue to be held in holding areas for more than 48 hours.
- Inmates were not seen by medical staff within 48 hours, as required by the facility operation plan.
- Doctor's orders continued to not be followed
- 60-minute observations of inmates were routinely exceeded by staff on a routine basis
- Harris County failed to provide at least one jailer on each floor of the facility where 10 or more inmates are housed with no less than 1 jailer per 48 inmates or an increment thereof on each floor.

Judge Bill Stoudt, Longview, Chair
Dr. Esmail Porsa, M.D., Houston, Vice-Chair
Ross Reyes, Melissa

Sheriff Kelly Rowe, Lubbock
Sheriff Raul "Pinky" Gonzales, Refugio
Patricia M. Anthony, Garland

Commissioner Ben Perry, Waco
Duane Lock, Southlake
Monica McBride, Alpine

"The Commission on Jail Standards welcomes all suggestions and will promptly respond to all complaints directed against the agency or any facilities under its purview".

To empower local government to provide safe, secure and suitable local jail facilities through proper rules and procedures while promoting innovative programs and ideas

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A special inspection was conducted on April 24, 2023, as a result of a death in custody. The investigation determined that the Harris County Jail had not observed the inmate no less than once every 60 minutes as required, and the Harris County Jail was issued a notice of non-compliance with minimum jail standards.

At its regularly scheduled meeting on May 11, 2023, the Texas Commission on Jail Standards received an update from Executive Director Wood. In addition, county officials provided comments. The commission, by appropriate motion and second, voted to grant the executive director the authority to issue a Remedial Order requiring Harris County to comply with minimum jail standards in regards to staffing, and for Harris County officials to provide the Commission with a staffing plan within 90 days for review and approval.

At its regularly scheduled meeting on November 2, 2023, the Texas Commission on Jail Standards received an update from Executive Director Wood. In addition, county officials provided comments. The commission, by appropriate motion and second, voted to grant the executive director the authority to reduce the number of variance beds Harris County was authorized to utilize. The reduction, in increments of 144 beds, began December 1, 2023, and continued each month until minimum staffing could be met and maintained at all times.

A comprehensive reinspection of Harris County Jail was conducted on February 20th, 2024. The inspectors determined that previously identified areas of non-compliance remained and additional areas of non-compliance were identified. A Notice of Non-Compliance was issued to the Harris County Jail. Below are the details.

- Records reviewed failed to demonstrate that inmates housed at the 1307 Baker St Facility are provided medication in accordance with written instructions from a physician.
- 60-minute observations of inmates were exceeded by staff in January approximately 1400 times by 2 minutes to 115 minutes. Additionally, observation records for areas where inmates known to be assaultive, potentially suicidal, mentally ill, or who have demonstrated bizarre behavior are confined exceeded the 30-minute observation by 2 minutes to 195 minutes. This deficiency is continued from the August 28, 2023 inspection.
- On more than one occasion, Harris County failed to meet the 1:48 officer to inmate staffing ratio as required by standards. This deficiency is continued from the August 28, 2023 inspection.

A special inspection of the Harris County Jail was conducted on April 8, 2024, in response to a complaint. After it was determined Harris County Jail staff entered housing unit 4D1-1 and removed all inmate mattresses from the housing unit without disciplinary due process, a notice of non-compliance with minimum jail standards was issued.

At its regularly scheduled meeting on May 2nd, 2024, the Texas Commission on Jail Standards received an update from Executive Director Wood. In addition, county officials provided comments. The commission, by appropriate

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motion and second, voted to grant the executive director the authority to amend the Remedial Order requiring Harris County to limit the inmate population of the Harris County Jail System to the amount of staff available.

ISSUED this 2nd day of May 2024

TEXAS COMMISSION ON JAIL STANDARDS

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brandon Wood".

Brandon Wood, Executive Director

cc: Governor Gregg Abbott
Governor, State of Texas

Judge Bill Stoudt, Longview, Chair
Dr. Esmaeil Porsa, M.D., Houston, Vice-Chair
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