

# Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Audit and Accountability Bureau



## CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SYSTEM AUDIT

CUSTODY OPERATIONS –  
CUSTODY SERVICES DIVISION –  
GENERAL POPULATION –  
INMATE RECEPTION CENTER  
Project No. 2020-13-A



Alex Villanueva, Sheriff

June 15, 2021

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT  
Audit and Accountability Bureau**

**CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SYSTEM AUDIT  
CUSTODY OPERATIONS  
CUSTODY SERVICES DIVISION - GENERAL POPULATION  
INMATE RECEPTION CENTER  
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**PURPOSE**

The Audit and Accountability Bureau (AAB) conducted the Closed Circuit Television System Audit - Inmate Reception Center (IRC) 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) complied with the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) Settlement Agreement<sup>1</sup> (Agreement) and the Department's Custody Division Manual (CDM) pertaining to the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system.

The AAB conducted this audit under the guidance of the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards.<sup>2</sup> The AAB determined the evidence obtained was sufficient and appropriate to provide reasonable assurance for the results based on the audit objectives.

**BACKGROUND**

The intent of the Agreement is to build upon existing measures and sustain systemic improvements designed to protect inmates from conditions in custody which place them in unreasonable danger.

The Agreement outlines a series of provisions which are intended to provide adequate care, treatment, and living conditions for inmates in the Los Angeles County jail system. In particular, Agreement Recommendation No. 83, addresses the installation of closed circuit security cameras throughout the Department's jail facilities including housing and common areas. According to the Agreement, the Department will install a sufficient number of cameras in jail facilities to ensure that common areas of the facilities are equipped with security-camera coverage.

Video surveillance is "an invaluable tool for objective accounting and insight."<sup>3</sup> The use of surveillance cameras serve as a deterrent for unnecessary and excessive force, assaults, and unlawful injuries. Surveillance cameras enhance the reliability of investigations by allowing the Department the ability to store and review camera

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<sup>1</sup> The Department entered into a joint settlement agreement with the United States DOJ, which was filed as a complaint in the United States District Court, Central District of California, Western Division, Case No. CV 15-5903, regarding the Los Angeles County Jails.

<sup>2</sup> United States Government Accountability Office, Government Auditing Standards, July 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Report of the Citizens' Commission on Jail Violence, September 2012.

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footage for the analysis of an incident. Use of these cameras are not simply an invaluable evidentiary tool, but they promote jail order, security, and can quickly absolve jail personnel of frivolous claims by inmates that would otherwise take time to investigate and resolve.

### **PRIOR AUDIT**

This was the first CCTV Audit conducted by the AAB at the IRC.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Scope**

The audit encompassed two main objectives regarding the review of CCTV:

- Objective No. 1 –Continuous Recording of Use of Force Incidents- To determine if the cameras continuously recorded use of force incidents.
- Objective No. 2 – Watch Commander Responsibilities - To determine if the Watch Commanders documented the CCTV inspection during each shift, documented any camera malfunctions, and made notification of the malfunction to the video manager.

#### **Audit Time Period**

The audit time period was from January 1, 2020, through June 30, 2020.

#### **Audit Population**

Auditors identified varying populations in order to examine the different aspects of the two main objectives, which are described in the Audit Objectives and Results section of this report.

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**AUDIT OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS**

**Objective No. 1 – Use of Force Incidents are Continuously Recorded on the Closed Circuit Television System**

**Objective No. 1(a) – To Determine if Use of Force Incidents are Recorded on the Closed Circuit Television System**

Criteria

Custody Division Manual, Section 7-06/010.00, Video and Audio Recording Procedures (March 2019), states:

*Fixed Video Surveillance*

*Fixed video surveillance involves cameras permanently or temporarily mounted in designated locations which continuously record all activities in the cameras' view.*

*The Sheriff's Department's primary objectives with fixed video surveillance are to:*

- *Record/document events as they occur;*
- *Provide real-time intelligence for Department Personnel*
- *Provide video evidence of actions by inmates and staff*
- *Provide a deterrent effect against inmate violence;*
- *Provide for post-incident analysis*

Procedures

Auditors reviewed the Performance Recording and Monitoring System (PRMS) to determine the number of use of force incidents that occurred at the IRC during the audit time period. A total of 43 use of force incidents were identified for review. Auditors evaluated the CCTV to determine if the use of force was recorded.

Results

All 43 (100%) use of force incidents met the criteria for this objective.

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**Objective No. 1(b) – To Determine if the Use of Force Incident Recording is  
Retained for Twelve Months**

Criteria

Custody Division Manual, Section 7-06/010.00, Video and Audio Recording Procedures (March 2019), states:

*Retention of Recordings*

*...Fixed video surveillance cameras will record continuously and the contents shall be retained in electronic storage devices for a minimum of twelve (12) months...*

Procedures

Auditors evaluated the CCTV system to determine if recorded footage was retained for the required 12 month period. Therefore auditors evaluated a total of 16 use of force incidents which occurred in the month of January 2020, for this objective. The evaluation was conducted prior to February 2021, therefore, any use of force subsequent to February 2020 had not reached the 12 month archival period.

Results

All 16 (100%) use of force incidents met the criteria for this objective.

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**Objective No. 1(c) – To Determine if the Closed Circuit Television System  
Continuously Recorded the Use of Force Incident**

Criteria

Custody Division Manual, Section 7-06/010.00, Video and Audio Recording Procedures (March 2019), states:

*Retention of Recordings*

*...Fixed video surveillance cameras will record continuously...*

Procedures

Auditors reviewed the Performance Recording and Monitoring System (PRMS) to determine the number of use of force incidents that occurred at the IRC during the audit time period. A total of 43 use of force incidents were identified for review. Auditors evaluated the CCTV to determine if the use of force was recorded.

Results

All 43 (100%) use of force incidents met the criteria for this objective.

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**Objective No. 1(d) – To Determine if the Recording of the Use of Force Incident was Included in the Investigation Package**

Criteria

Custody Division Manual, Section 7-06/020.00, Use of Force Package (March 2019), states:

*In addition to the required items set forth in the Manual of Policy and Procedures (MPP) Use of Force policies, Custody Services Division force review packages shall include the following items:*

- *Audio and/or video recordings (including all viewpoints of Closed Circuit Television [CCTV] or hand-held camera and radio transmissions) of the incident, if applicable...*

Procedures

Auditors reviewed the Performance Recording and Monitoring System (PRMS) to determine the number of use force incidents that occurred at the IRC during the audit time period. A total of 43 use force incidents were identified for review. Auditors evaluated all 43 use of force packages to determine if the CCTV recordings were included.

Results

All 43 (100%) use of force incidents met the criteria for this objective.

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### **Objective No. 1(e) – To Determine if the Recordings of All Viewpoints were Included in the Investigation Package**

#### Criteria

Custody Division Manual, Section 7-06/020.00, Use of Force Package (March 2019), states:

*In addition to the required items set forth in the Manual of Policy and Procedures (MPP) Use of Force policies, Custody Services Division force review packages shall include the following items:*

- *Audio and/or video recordings (including all viewpoints of Closed Circuit Television [CCTV] or hand-held camera and radio transmissions) of the incident, if applicable...*

#### Procedures

Auditors reviewed the Performance Recording and Monitoring System (PRMS) to determine the number of use force incidents that occurred at the IRC during the audit time period. A total of 43 use force incidents were identified for review. Auditors evaluated all 43 use of force packages to determine if all viewpoints of the incident were included with the investigation package. Auditors reviewed a list (IRC CCTV camera tree) of all CCTV cameras installed at the IRC to determine the potential viewpoints for each specific use of force incident.

#### Results

Thirty-five of the 43 (81%) incidents met the criteria. Auditors determined that the remaining eight investigation packages did not contain all of the video viewpoints

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**Objective No. 2 – Watch Commander Responsibilities**

**Objective No. 2(a) - To Determine if the Watch Commander’s Log Documented the Closed Circuit Television System Inspection**

Criteria

Custody Division Manual, Section 7-06/010.00, Video and Audio Recording Procedures (March 2019), states:

*Fixed Video Equipment Inspection*

- *The watch commander shall confirm all surveillance cameras are properly functioning and recording at the beginning of each shift by logging into the system...*
- *...The fixed video equipment inspection shall be documented in the facility Watch Commander’s Log.*

Procedures

Auditors compiled a population of 546 Watch Commander’s Logs for the audit time period. A statistically random sample of 82 use of force incidents were identified for review.<sup>4</sup> Auditors evaluated the logs to determine if the watch commander documented the inspection of the CCTV system.

Results

All 82 (100%) logs met the criteria.

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

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**Objective No. 2(b) – To Determine if the Watch Commander’s Log Documented  
any Camera Malfunctions**

Criteria

Custody Division Manual, Section 7-06/010.00, Video and Audio Recording Procedures (March 2019), states:

*Fixed Video Equipment Inspection*

- *...The watch commander shall notify the designated video manager of any malfunctions,...and document all actions taken in the Watch Commander’s Log, including who was notified...*

Procedures

Auditors used the population from Objective 2(a). Auditors evaluated the Watch Commander’s Log to determine if the watch commander documented any camera malfunctions. Auditors identified seven of the 82 logs were applicable to this criteria because they indicated a camera malfunction.

Results

Seven of the 7 (100%) logs met the criteria.

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**Objective No. 2(c) – To Determine if the Watch Commander’s Log Documented  
Any Malfunctions and the Notification to the Video Manager**

Criteria

Custody Division Manual, Section 7-06/010.00, Video and Audio Recording Procedures (March 2019), states:

*Fixed Video Equipment Inspection*

- *...The watch commander shall notify the designated video manager of any malfunctions, ...and document all actions taken in the Watch Commander’s Log, including who was notified...*

Procedures

Auditors used the population from Objective 2(a). Auditors reviewed the Watch Commander’s Log to determine if the watch commanders documented a notification to the video manager when a camera malfunction occurred. Auditors identified seven of the 82 logs were applicable to this criteria because they indicated a camera malfunction.

Results

Six of the 7 (86%) logs met the criteria. One log did not meet the criteria because notification to the video manager was not documented on the log.

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**SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

The audit yielded the following results:

<b>Objective No.</b>	<b>Audit Objectives</b>	<b>Met the Criteria</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>USE OF FORCE INCIDENTS CONTINUOUSLY RECORDED ON THE CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION SYSTEM</b>	
1(a)	<i>To Determine if the Use of Force Incident is Recorded on the Closed Circuit Television System</i>	<b>100%</b>
1(b)	<i>To Determine if the Use of Force Incident Recording is Retained for Twelve Months</i>	<b>100%</b>
1(c)	<i>To Determine if the Closed Circuit Television System Continuously Recorded the Use of Force Incident</i>	<b>100%</b>
1(d)	<i>To Determine if the Recording of the Use of Force Incident was Included in the Investigation Package</i>	<b>100%</b>
1(e)	<i>To Determine if the Recordings of All Viewpoints were Included in the Investigation Package</i>	<b>81%</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>WATCH COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	
2(a)	<i>To Determine if the Watch Commander Log Documented the Closed Circuit Television System Inspection</i>	<b>100%</b>
2(b)	<i>To Determine if the Watch Commander Log Documented any Camera Malfunctions</i>	<b>100%</b>
2(c)	<i>To Determine if the Watch Commander Log Documented Any Malfunctions and the Notification to the Video Manager</i>	<b>86%</b>

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**OTHER RELATED MATTERS**

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

*Quality of Video Recordings*

Auditors evaluated the quality of the CCTV footage during the review of the use of force incidents in Objective No. 1. It was observed that the overall quality of the footage appeared adequate. Auditors noted no blurry, grainy, or obstructed footage, and all footage was uninterrupted.

**CONCLUSION**

Auditors performed analyses and made assessments to identify areas in need of improvement. The AAB considers the results of this audit to be a helpful management tool for all Department personnel. The evidence presented provides reasonable assurance that Department personnel are strictly adhering to policies and procedures regarding the CCTV system at IRC.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Without proper working video surveillance, the Department will risk the ability to manage the overall safety of inmates and custody personnel, to support or refute allegations against inmates and custody personnel, and the use the CCTV recordings as critical evidence for investigations

Department management should disseminate the results of this audit to its personnel. Additionally, as best practice, Department management is encouraged to conduct recurring and ongoing briefing of policies and procedures.

**Views of Responsible Officials**

On June 1, 2021 Custody Services Division command staff submitted a formal response to the AAB concurring with the audit results.

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This audit was submitted on this 15th day of June 2021, by the Audit and Accountability Bureau.

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