



TCSO 2017 PREA Annual Report

Prepared by PREA Coordinator, Kristi Wings-Yanez

Background

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was passed by Congress and signed into federal law by President George W. Bush in 2003 to prevent, detect and respond to sexual abuse and sexual harassment occurring in confinement settings. The National Prison Rape Elimination Commission developed national standards which apply to adult prisons and jails, juvenile facilities, lockups and community confinement facilities.

Travis County Sheriff's Office Zero Tolerance Policy

The Travis County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) has ZERO TOLERANCE for all forms of sexual abuse and sexual harassment within its jail facilities. It is the policy of the Sheriff's Office to respond to, and administratively and/or criminally investigate all alleged incidents of a sexual nature. Every reported incident of a sexual nature will be taken seriously, investigated fully, and appropriate action will be taken as warranted. Procedures are in place to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual misconduct in accordance with federal PREA standards.

TCSO has a designated agency-wide PREA Coordinator, who coordinates all PREA efforts, as well as PREA Compliance Managers at both the Travis County Correctional Complex (TCCC) and Travis County Jail (TCJ) who guide staff in their duties. Other efforts to comply with the PREA standards include, but are not limited to:

- Training for all staff, volunteers, contractors and inmates
- Specialized investigative, medical and mental health training
- Collaboration with the Travis County Victim Services Unit
- Collaboration with SafePlace (rape crisis counseling, forensic exams and victim services)
- Implementation of internal reporting hotline
- Implementation of confidential or anonymous support services hotline to SafePlace
- Development of education materials to be provided to inmates
- Assessment for risk of victimization during initial intake
- Deployment of video monitoring systems
- Appropriate staffing and maintaining minimum staffing levels
- Hiring and promotion standards
- Appropriate classification and housing of all inmates

- Coordinated response to all incidents by first responders, medical and mental health practitioners, investigators and facility leadership
- Thorough investigations of all complaints of sexual misconduct

PREA Statistics

TCSO collects data in accordance with PREA standard 115.87 in order to assess and improve the effectiveness of its sexual abuse prevention, detection, and response policies, practices and training. Each year, the information collected for this report will be used to identify problem areas and to take corrective action on an ongoing basis.

2017 Survey of Sexual Violence

Each year, TCSO reports PREA data to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. The statistics for 2017 were:

Inmate on Inmate Nonconsensual Sexual Acts:

Substantiated	1
Unsubstantiated	0
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	4

Inmate on Inmate Abusive Sexual Contact:

Substantiated	5
Unsubstantiated	13
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>9</u>
Total	27

Inmate on Inmate Sexual Harassment:

Substantiated	10
Unsubstantiated	38
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>6</u>
Total	54

Staff Sexual Misconduct:

Substantiated	0
Unsubstantiated	0
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>30</u>
Total	30

Staff Sexual Harassment:

Substantiated	0
Unsubstantiated	2
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>13</u>
Total	15

Effectiveness of PREA Efforts

In comparison to previous years, in most categories the numbers are similar or slightly lower, and the number of substantiated cases remained low. This is evidence of the hard work we do to prevent sexual assault, misconduct and harassment. We expect to see steady numbers of reported cases as we work to create a reporting culture, where inmates know their rights and feel safe to talk with staff and use available hotlines. We create this culture through our continued efforts:

- Continued training of all staff, volunteers, contractors and inmates
- PREA Hotlines
- Kiosks, which make communication easier for inmates, and which also now provide PREA education
- Inmate education videos and posters
- Showing of PREA videos to inmates

One category of reports was significantly lower. October 2017, we clarified our response to inmate-on-inmate sexual harassment reports based on a close review of the PREA definitions and the sexual harassment cases from 2017. In the past, we have undergone a PREA investigation when harassment was alleged, even when it did not fully meet the definition of harassment under the PREA rule. Under that rule, the inmate must allege that the harassment is *repeated* (more than one incident); and *directed towards him/her/them*. The PREA team issued guidance on the definition and while an inmate may make an allegation that requires a response (unit difficulty moves or inmate disciplinary action in the same manner as any other incident) not all incidents will get a PREA response. This was a great step for us: we can better identify true harassment cases for PREA statistics and allow our staff to focus on the cases that merit a PREA response.

Progress in 2017

Having achieved PREA certification in 2016, we focused on streamlining and improving our PREA incident process. Our use of the new PREA investigations worksheet has greatly simplified and standardized our incident response and data collection.

The department civilianized the PREA coordinator position early in 2017, and in September, Kristi Winges-Yanez took over leadership of the PREA team, which also includes TCCC Compliance Manager Sgt. T. Shumard and TCJ Compliance Manager Sgt. Z. Mansaray. This change gives us fresh eyes on our policies and practices, and with ongoing refinement and training, we look forward to continuing our success in PREA compliance.

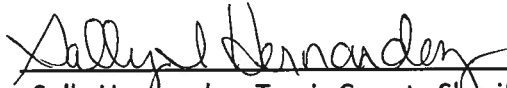
Continuing Areas of Focus and Improvement for 2018


Moving forward, we will be working on the following priorities:

1. Training, Training, Training!
 - All staff will undergo PREA refresher training in 2018! We look forward to going over PREA basics and hot topics.
 - For sergeants who do the critical work of PREA investigations, we are developing specialized investigator training. This should be a great class with real examples and the opportunity to share best practices.
 - Additionally, we are developing training on transgender inmate issues that will go over current research regarding this vulnerable population.
2. Streamlining of transgender inmate screening, search, and housing
3. Increasing Audit Capacity
 - Sgt. Shumard and Coordinator Wings-Yanez have been admitted to the DOJ's PREA Auditor Training this May, and they are ready and excited to become certified PREA Auditors by February of 2019! This will increase our own agency expertise while giving us the ability to arrange for reciprocal or circular audits with other jurisdictions.

Conclusion:

The Travis County Correctional Complex (TCCC) and Travis County Jail (TCJ) facilities proudly continue our PREA compliance and certification. We maintain a strong commitment to complying with all PREA standards, keeping inmates safe and maintaining zero tolerance for all forms of sexual abuse and sexual harassment within our jail facilities.


Sally Hernandez, Travis County Sheriff


Date