



TCSO 2018 PREA Annual Report

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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's two correctional facilities achieved full compliance with PREA following intensive audits in 2016. TCSO has a designated agency-wide PREA Coordinator, who coordinates all PREA efforts, as well as PREA Compliance Officers at both the Travis County Correctional Complex (TCCC) and Travis County Jail (TCJ) who serve as facility compliance managers. 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 SAFE Alliance (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

2018 Survey of Sexual Violence

Each year, TCSO collects PREA 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. The information collected for this report will be used to identify problem areas and to take corrective action on an ongoing basis. This data must also be reported to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, when requested. The statistics for 2018 were:

Inmate on Inmate Nonconsensual Sexual Acts:

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

Inmate on Inmate Abusive Sexual Contact:

Substantiated	5
Unsubstantiated	7
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	13

Inmate on Inmate Sexual Harassment:

Substantiated	4
Unsubstantiated	27
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	34

Staff Sexual Misconduct (includes sexual contact, voyeurism, exposure):

Substantiated	0
Unsubstantiated	0
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>19</u>
Total	19

Staff Sexual Harassment:

Substantiated	1
Unsubstantiated	4
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	6

Effectiveness of PREA Efforts

In comparison to previous years, the numbers have decreased in every category, and the number of substantiated cases remained low. We have consistently seen an average of between 12-15% of cases being substantiated; in 2018 there were a total of 10 substantiated cases, or 13.7% of the total investigations.

Analyzing this data, it is clear we continue to have a reporting culture here. While we have seen a drop in overall reports which we will continue to monitor, we do have a significant number being reported each month and from a wide cross-section of our facilities. Our numbers indicate that the trend of declining incidents of sexual abuse and harassment continues.

Progress in 2018

Our 2017 goals involved training, improving processes regarding transgender and intersex inmates, and increasing our audit capacity. We met these goals and improved other processes as well.

Our biannual PREA refresher training was conducted online over the summer. Correctional staff and selected groups of law enforcement and administrative and support staff completed the task with flying colors. We continued to issue regular training briefs over email and in person, and have worked to increase our presence in housing units.

The Gender Review Team has been in place since 2016 to review housing and programming placements for transgender and intersex inmates. In 2018, we transitioned to a more interactive review process that includes in person interviews with PREA staff and in person meetings of the team itself, which includes classifications, behavioral health, medical, and other staff. We have also vastly increased the ongoing monitoring of this population, as each inmate reviewed by the GRT now receives regular and frequent follow-up visits from a PREA officer. This improved process is giving us better information and more conversation regarding these complex cases while ensuring that we maintain the safety of these vulnerable inmates as well as the security of the complex as a whole.

Changes came to our team over the summer when the Correctional Sergeants serving as facility compliance managers moved on to other assignments. We assessed correctional needs and long-term planning for the PREA program and decided to reorganize. The PREA team is still led by the PREA Coordinator, who continues to oversee our compliance efforts agency-wide. She now oversees two PREA Compliance Officers who are assigned to PREA full time and who act as facility compliance managers, one for the downtown facilities (Officer T. Trieschock) and another at the Del Valle site (Officer M. Duran). These officers joined the team after a competitive selection process, and they are already hard at work reviewing allegations and

incident reports, educating inmates, and covering the large variety of tasks that ensure sexual safety at TCSO.

Continuing Areas of Focus and Improvement for 2019


We are now approaching our next PREA audit, which will take place in the first half of 2020. That means this year we will focus on careful review of each area of our program to prevent, detect, and respond to sexual abuse and sexual harassment. We will identify any gaps and work to institutionalize any changes before our audit. As a first step in this process, during the beginning of 2019 the PREA Compliance Officers plan to attend at least one briefing for every correctional shift. We hope to answer any questions and help the entire division get to know our team.

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