



TCSO 2016 PREA Annual Report

Prepared by PREA Coordinator, Lt. Bucky Eacret

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.

2016 Survey of Sexual Violence

Each year, TCSO reports PREA data to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. The statistics for 2016 were:

Inmate on Inmate Nonconsensual Sexual Acts:

Substantiated	0
Unsubstantiated	2
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	4

Inmate on Inmate Abusive Sexual Contact:

Substantiated	5
Unsubstantiated	14
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>13</u>
Total	32

Inmate on Inmate Sexual Harassment:

Substantiated	24
Unsubstantiated	61
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>23</u>
Total	108

Staff Sexual Misconduct:

Substantiated	0
Unsubstantiated	1
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>34</u>
Total	35

Staff Sexual Harassment:

Substantiated	0
Unsubstantiated	1
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>12</u>
Total	13

Effectiveness of PREA Efforts

In comparison to previous years, the data looks good. Although the total number of complaints continues to rise, the number of substantiated cases remains low. The rise in the total number of complaints can be attributed to:

- Continued training of all staff, volunteers, contractors and inmates
- Heightened awareness by all of sexual behavior
- PREA Hotlines
- Addition of kiosks, which makes communication easier for inmates
- Improved inmate education videos and posters
- Showing of PREA videos to inmates three times per week

Therefore, the rise in total reports is not only expected but, in conjunction with the number of substantiated cases remaining low, is a sign that our continued efforts are effective in addressing sexual misconduct.

Progress in 2016

2016 was a banner year for the PREA Program. In April we hosted the U.S. Department of Justice PREA Auditor Field Training Program Training Audit. It was grueling, as 13 individuals audited us very thoroughly for one week. These were auditor trainees, so they were searching extremely closely for any possible PREA violation or area of improvement. We knew going into the training audit that we were not ready to pass yet, but looked at it as a great opportunity to not only assist the DOJ and make close contacts within the PREA community, but also to learn and improve in anticipation of our real audit; and that is exactly what we did.

After learning from the mock audit, and implementing all recommendations for improvement, we conducted our real PREA Audit in October. We sailed through the audit with flying colors, passing all 50 standards and became one of the few jails in the country, and only the third jail in Texas, to be PREA Certified. We are extremely proud of that accomplishment.

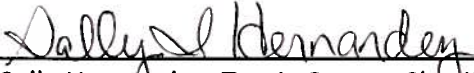
Continuing Areas of Focus and Improvement for 2017

Moving forward, we will be working to improve in three specific areas:

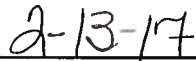
1. Civilianizing the PREA Coordinator Position – We will be submitting a budget proposal to make the PREA Coordinator a non-sworn position, taking back the current Lieutenant position to be used in other areas of need.
2. Improving Camera Systems – We will continue seeking funds to improve camera systems in several areas within the jail. Camera and video monitoring improvements have been underway for years, but there are still areas which either have no systems, or which have very old systems in need of upgrading.
3. Improving the PREA Database – We will be working with other county entities to either improve our current Excel database, or to switch to a new one, to improve data collection and reporting.

Conclusion:

The Travis County Correctional Complex (TCCC) and Travis County Jail (TCJ) facilities are now PREA certified. 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