



## **TCSO 2014 PREA Annual Report**

### **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 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 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.

### **2014 Survey of Sexual Violence**

Each year, TCSO reports PREA data to the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. During calendar year 2014, there were a total of 50,380 new admissions into the Travis County Jail System (38,215 males and 12,165 females). The average daily population was 2,346 (2,040 males and 306 females). The reported statistics for 2014 were:

#### **Inmate on Inmate Nonconsensual Sexual Acts:**

Substantiated	0
Unsubstantiated	2
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	3

#### **Inmate on Inmate Abusive Sexual Contact:**

Substantiated	4
Unsubstantiated	10
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>5</u>
Total	19

#### **Inmate on Inmate Sexual Harassment:**

Substantiated	10
Unsubstantiated	16
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>17</u>
Total	43

#### **Staff Sexual Misconduct:**

Substantiated	0
Unsubstantiated	2
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>12</u>
Total	14

#### **Staff Sexual Harassment:**

Substantiated	0
Unsubstantiated	4
<u>Unfounded</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	7

## Effectiveness of PREA Efforts

In comparison to previous years, the data looks good. Although the total number of complaints went up (86 in 2014 vs. 77 in 2013), the number of substantiated cases went down (14 in 2014 vs. 23 in 2013). The rise in the total number of complaints can be attributed to:

- Addition of the PREA Hotline
- Addition of the SafePlace Hotline
- Improved inmate education
- Weekly showing of PREA videos to inmates
- Continued training of all staff, volunteers, contractors and inmates.

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

## Problem Areas and Corrective Action

Moving forward, we still have work to do in order to become PREA certified. Some of standards we will be working on include:

- 115.13 (A staffing plan taking PREA into consideration)
- 115.14 (Separation of youthful inmates {under 18} from those 18 and over)
- 115.17e (Criminal records checks every 5 years for all staff)
- 115.22 (PREA policy on website)
- 115.33a (PREA brochure for inmates at Central Booking)
- 115.33f (PREA information in Inmate Handbook)
- 115.34 (Specialized Investigations Training for all Sergeants)
- 115.42f (Transgender/intersex inmates shower separately)
- 115.54 (Information on website for third party reporting)
- 115.67c (Monitor for retaliation)
- 115.73 (Report disposition of cases back to inmate)
- 115.86 (Sexual abuse incident reviews)
- 115.88 (Place PREA Annual Report on website)
- 115.89 (Place sexual abuse data on website)
- Policy revisions addressing the above

## Conclusion:

The Travis County Sheriff's Office is making great progress in becoming PREA certified, keeping inmates safe and maintaining zero tolerance for all forms of sexual abuse and harassment.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Hamilton, Sheriff

9/6/15  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date