

JAIL BULLETIN

Number 98

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The Jail Bulletin is a monthly feature of the Crime Commission Update. The Bulletin may be used as a supplement to your jail inservice training program if officers study the material and complete the attached "open book" quiz. The Bulletin and quiz may be reproduced for use by your staff. We welcome any jail training material you would like to contribute to the Bulletin.

MODES OF SUPERVISION IN SMALL JAILS

the results of a survey recently conducted as part of the national institute of corrections' "model architectural plans for small jails" project indicate that most small jails in this county use a type of inmate surveillance that can be called "intermittent". In 88% of the small jails surveyed, the primary surveillance method is for officers to make periodic rounds through each cellblock or past each individual cell. The remaining 12% that do not use the intermittent approach use one of the following methods.

Direct Supervision -- Posting an officer around-the-clock within each cellblock or pod in direct, barrier-free contact with inmates. This practice has become known in the past few years as "direct supervision". About one percent of the jails under a 50-inmate design capacity reported that they use this approach to supervision.

Remote Surveillance -- Posting an officer around-the-clock in a secure guard station outside of a group of cellblocks or pods, but looking directly into them from either a non-secure post or a secure control post. Five percent indicated that they use this method, which has come to be referred to as "remote surveillance".

CCTB/Audio - Utilizing a dispatcher or other staff person to scan closed circuit television (CCTV) screens and/or monitor audio equipment, but not to actually enter cellblocks on a regular basis. Approximately six percent of survey respondents indicated that they use this method.

PROBLEMS WITH "LINEAR" JAILS

for the most part, intermittent surveillance is a function of the nature of the design of many jails. As pointed out by Stephen Gettinger in New Generation Jails: An Innovative Approach to an Age-Old Problem:

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Many of the problems of traditional jails can be traced to their design. Cellblocks are usually “linear” -- a hallway or corridor lined with cells. This creates intermittent surveillance: An officer walks down the hallway periodically, but the rest of the time the inmates are out of sight. The result is that officers can control only the areas they work in or have clear sight line into at all times - primarily hallways and administrative areas.

This style of architecture and the accompanying surveillance approach form what is currently referred to as “linear-intermittent surveillance”. The term surveillance is used rather than supervision because most correctional experts agree that true supervision requires a level of interaction between staff and inmates that is relatively unattainable with the linear-intermittent approach.

The inability to supervise inmates inherent in these settings leads to problems that administrators of large and small jails know all too well:

Inmates are in Control

As one veteran sheriff put it, “We control the hallways and they control the cells.” Interaction in the linear jail is impeded by the design itself. Even the most aggressive attempts at supervision can usually be thwarted by inmates in such jails.

Tension and Violence

Since inmates control cell areas to a certain extent, tension and violence flourish in an atmosphere that breeds fights, vandalism, manufacture of weapons, and physical and sexual assault. Coercion and intimidation tend to be the “management” tools employed by occupants of these types of jails.

Staff Problems

For years we counseled the youth of this country that “Jail is Not a Good Place to Be!” Jail officers working in old linear facilities feel the same way. For many staff, the jail is a battle zone--a place where one must learn to survive through intimidation and physical force. It is a place where many simply “pay their dues” while waiting for a “real” law enforcement job as a street officer. Morale is often poor, and problems of absenteeism and lackluster performance abound.

Idleness

Inmates who have nothing to do will, in fact, find something to do. That something may be tearing out a light fixture, hassling another inmate, or engaging in other counterproductive behavior. Enforced idleness is not only unconstitutional, but it works against the goals of sound jail management.

Movement

Linear jails inhibit the convenient movement of inmates to programs and services because they usually require escorted movement to decentralized locations such as a rooftop recreation yard. To the degree that services can be arranged around the inmates in close proximity to housing areas, unnecessary and burdensome movement will be reduced.

Information

Intermittent surveillance impedes the flow of information between inmates and staff. Infrequent contact between officers and staff occurs because the environment is not conducive to quality communication. Both inmates and officers need a flow of information in order to remain correctly oriented to their respective roles.

Inconveniences

Traditional jail design does not lend itself to the reduction of “hassles”. Instead it contributes to the number of minor and major inconveniences that jail staff face each day. These include providing inmates access to the telephone, escorting them from one place to another, and being required to directly supervise inmate work activities in remote areas.

Cost

Vandalism and other forms of damage to jail property and equipment take a tremendous financial toll. Common targets of attack are lighting fixtures, window frames and glazing, bathroom fixtures, and bedding material. Effective surveillance--much less supervision--is difficult to attain in a linear facility.

None of the so-called “state-of-the-art” security hardware and materials will resist sustained and unrestrained attack. The key is proactive supervision, which creates the potential for normalizing the environment and for reducing costs through the use of less expensive alternatives in construction and furnishings.

Discipline

Discipline is difficult to maintain in the linear type facility. Because surveillance is intermittent, offenders are difficult to identify and even more difficult to prosecute, either through criminal or administrative procedure. Infractions occur in housing areas, which are primarily the domain of the inmate.

Many violations go undetected and seriously undermine the safety and security of the jail.

As one sheriff put it, “Discipline cannot be a sometimes thing. It is a constant, a tone that is set in a jail.” Too often we equate discipline with punishment. Ideally, discipline is the day-to-day correction of undesirable inmate behavior rather than the assessment of a major penalty when behavior deteriorates beyond the point of correction. To be corrected, misbehavior must be readily observable to staff who have full control of the jail.

SELECTING A SUPERVISION MODE

Experience over the past few years seems to indicate that good results can be achieved by placing a highly trained officer directly in the housing pod in constant contact with the inmates and in control of the housing unit. This approach to inmate management is referred to as **PODULAR-DIRECT SUPERVISION** and achieves excellent results in terms of reduction in vandalism, injuries to staff, and anti-social behavior.

An important principle of the direct-supervision approach is that an officer is assigned directly within each housing area. Typically, inmate capacities range from 45 to 50 in these pods. Only those inmates who cannot or will not behave rationally, such as drunks, the mentally ill, disruptive, and special management inmates, are housed in different accommodations. Unfortunately, podular-direct supervision is difficult to implement in small jails because of the following factors.

1. The inmate population is so small that it is simply not staff-efficient to post an officer directly in each housing unit created by a basic classification system (i.e. male, female, protective custody/administrative segregation, drunk, and disruptive, etc.).
2. State jail standards often require separation of inmates according to a variety of other criteria, such as sex, offense, court status, or other characteristics. This places restrictions on the types of individuals who may share a common housing unit.
3. The level of activity in a small jail often does not justify designation of separate full-time staff person for every function or post. Thus, officers must perform a variety of duties, without compromising inmate supervision. The podular-direct supervision approach dedicates one full-time position to the sole purpose of inmate housing supervision. In most small jails, this is not feasible.

The problem of choosing the best architectural style-supervision approach for the small jail is thus quite difficult. Although information based on recent experience suggests that the podular-direct supervision approach is ideal for large facilities, legal, economic, and operational restrictions limit its applicability to small jails. The widely used linear-intermittent approach, however, poses many problems related to safety, security, and custody.

Podular-remote surveillance represents a move away from the wholly negative aspects of linear design and intermittent surveillance toward some of the more proactive management features of podular-direct supervision. Podular-remote surveillance involves posting an officer in a secure guard station outside a group of cellblocks or pods but looking directly into them.

MAKING PODULAR-REMOTE WORK

At its worst, remote surveillance is nothing more than utilizing an officer as a sort of human television camera: the officer observes inmate activity areas but has no interaction with the activity and no effect on inmate behavior. Remote surveillance is primarily a reactive management approach, but it can be successful if the following guidelines and principles are observed:

Adequate Staffing is Crucial to Success. Consensus opinion among legal experts and experienced correctional practitioners is that a minimum of two staff persons should be on duty in the jail at all times. It is recommended that one officer occupy a secure, podular--remote surveillance post located and designed so that its occupant can provide visual surveillance of inmate housing. The second officer would function as a rover or floor officer and would carry only those keys necessary for his/her duties on the floor. From a secure, remote post, the control officer would be able to monitor the welfare of inmates and staff as well as to control the operation of doors and locking mechanisms. Thus, the incentive for attacks against staff as a means of escape is greatly reduced.

Specialized Training in Effective Methods of Supervision is Necessary. Regardless of

the architectural style or the supervision mode used, no jail can be operated successfully without an adequately trained staff. Most correctional officers receive some pre-service or first year in-service training. Typically, the curriculum includes such topics as self defense, key and tool control, cell and personal searches, report writing, and other basic skills and procedures.

Sometimes overlooked or under emphasized in this training is the fact that officers must be trained in communication skills and ways of influencing human behavior through positive techniques.

Officers must be trained to seek out contact with inmates rather than to avoid it. To the degree possible, rovers and floor officers should attempt to retain total control of the jail facility by reducing inmates' opportunities for long periods of unsupervised congregation. In the podular-direct supervision jail, contact between officers and staff is constant, but remote surveillance jails provide only relatively constant surveillance by the floor officer or rover. Ideally, but officers would be cross-trained to rotate between positions and would function as a team. The limitations of podular-remote surveillance can be mitigated if rovers and pod control officers interact and share information about inmate behavior gained through both visual/audio surveillance and personal interaction.

Design Complements the Ability to Supervise Inmates from a Secure, Remote Post. The officer operating in a direct supervision mode has maximum flexibility to move, to see, and to be seen by inmates in his/her housing unit. This is not true of the pod control officer, who sits in a "glass bubble". When the rover or floor officer is absent from a particular housing area, it is essential that the pod officer have an unobstructed view of all activity areas in the pod. Jail design features that maximize supervision ability include:

- Adequate lighting in the pod day room and cells.
- Absence of "blind spots" created by remote shower rooms or other recessed area. Open back stairs are recommended for two-level pods.
- Vertical glass observation windows on cell doors rather than small windows at eye level only.

Inmates Should be Able to Communicate Freely with the Pod Control Officer. Personal interaction and the flow of information between inmates and officers are keys to successfully managing the inmate population any jail. Secure control rooms with high-security glazing present a problem for voice communication in many podular remote supervision jails. An electronic two-way voice communication capability must be established in order to facilitate conversations between inmates in cells and dayrooms and the officer located in the confines of the control room.

The Jail Design and Operation Must Address the Need to Reduce Inconveniences and the Necessity for Unescorted Movement. The pod control officer is primarily an observer and cannot leave his/her post to perform the duties of a rover. The following steps can be taken to avoid overloading the rover position with unnecessary duties.

--Reduce the need for escorted movement to programs, services, and activities by bringing services to inmates (e.g., library books distributed on a moveable cart) and designing recreation yards, inmate visiting areas, and multi-purpose rooms so that they are adjacent to inmate housing units and accessible via short, observable travel patterns.

--Analyze the most frequent sources of labor-intensive activities, such as providing regular access to telephones, and create design solutions that help to eliminate the "hassles" (e.g., telephones in housing units rather than at remote locations.)

Maintain Total Control of all Areas of the Jail and Consistently Enforce Rules Through Disciplinary Procedures. To be corrected, misbehavior must be observed by jail staff who have total control of the jail. In a direct supervision jail, supervision is relatively constant and rule violations are easily detected. Remote surveillance requires coordination between the rover and the pod control room officer, who must act as a team in order to compensate for the fact that the rover's presence in the housing unit is periodic rather than constant. When infractions are noted, immediate action must be taken to implement informal or formal disciplinary proceedings ranging from a verbal reprimand to immediate removal from the general population housing unit. In all cases, procedures should be followed that guarantee the inmate's right to due process.

Plan for the Provision of Backup Assistance to the Rover in Case of Emergencies. There will be occasions when the pod control officer will be forced to summon other personnel to provide assistance to the roving officer(s) who work in the housing areas and other parts of the jail. Under no circumstances should a pod control officer leave a secure post to render assistance unless there is a facility master control to assume responsibility for monitoring building security. Therefore, it is essential that other personnel be available to provide assistance as soon as possible. This presents special problems in the small sheriff's department or correctional system since other department employees may be relatively remote from the jail and unable to respond in a timely fashion. Where this is the case, officials should develop cooperative agreements with other agencies, such as municipal police and fire departments of the state police, which can render assistance in the event of serious threats to safety and security in the jail.

The Facility Design and Security/Control Systems Should Respond to a Logical Classification and Custody Plan. Early in the planning process for a new jail, the local jurisdiction should project a total capacity for the jail. That projection must be broken down into anticipated cell space needs for various classifications of inmates requiring separation and differing levels of supervision and security. At a minimum, separate housing areas should be available to allow jail officials to segregate males, females, and juveniles (juveniles are not recommended to be held in adult facilities). Depending on individual statutes, reliance on nationally accepted standards, and management's correctional philosophy, the physical plant may also have to allow for separate housing for the following inmate classifications:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| -Pre-trial inmates | -Weekenders |
| -Sentenced inmates | -Aggressive or violent "predators" |
| -Misdemeanants | -Week or passive "prey" |
| -Felons | -Administrative segregation |
| -Civil holds | (Protective Custody) |
| -Trustees or | -Disciplinary segregation |
| institutional workers | -Work release |

This is not to suggest that a separate, dedicated housing area must be designed for each distinct classification of inmates. It is important, however, for the jail's housing units to be sufficient in number, size, type of security, furnishings, and hardware to permit the implementation of a logically conceived and legally defensible classification plan that allows staff to manage the population safely and securely.

CONCLUSION

Many recently constructed jails are characterized by a linear design that dictates the relatively ineffective intermittent surveillance of inmates by staff. The reason(s) many small jurisdictions use a linear design rather than a more progressive one is something about which knowledgeable corrections professional and architects can only speculate. It may be that:

- Small jurisdictions often do not attract jail-experienced architects with knowledge of contemporary design options and their operational impact.
- they fail to develop an adequate statement of inmate management goals and objectives as part of an adequately prepared pre-architectural program.
- They hesitate to use high technology electronic control equipment found in modern, well-equipped control rooms.
- They want the facility to "look like a jail" in spite of the fact that a punitive environment is probably not desirable or legal for jails that confine a largely pretrial population.
- they fail to conduct a staffing analysis to determine the manpower needs and problems that accompany the linear -- intermittent surveillance approach.

Just as there is no one way to "skin a cat" there is no single way to design and operate a jail. But as has been previously discussed, a few basic principles have emerged from research, innovative design efforts and the practical experiences of jail managers. To ignore these emerging principles to doom ourselves to repeat the failure of the past and saddle our local governments with new, small jails that duplicate the operational, fiscal and legal liabilities they hoped to escape.

This issue of Jail Bulletin was prepared by Dan Evans, Acting Senior Field Representative, Jail Standards Division, Nebraska Crime Commission. This material is taken from the Small Jail Special Issues by: Kimme Planning and Architecture Developed under a National Institute of Corrections Grant.

QUIZ

Nebraska Jail Standards require that jail staff receive eighteen (18) hours of inservice training each year. The Jail Bulletin may be used to supplement inservice training if an officer studies the bulletin, completes the quiz, and this process is documented by the jail administrator for review during annual jail inspections.

JUNE 1993

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**SUBJECT: MODES OF SUPERVISION
IN SMALL JAILS**

NAME _____

DATE _____

1. Most small jails use a type of inmate surveillance that can be called

2. Many of the problems of traditional jails can be traced to their
 - A. Staffing levels
 - B. Design
 - C. Security hardware

3. Podular-direct supervision is ideal for use in
 - A. Small holding facilities
 - B. Work release areas
 - C. Large jails

4. The podular-remote method of supervision requires that at least _____ staff persons should be on duty at all times.

5. Placing an officer directly in a housing unit who is in constant contact with inmates is called

6. Podular-remote supervision works best when staff members avoid interaction with inmates.

TRUE

FALSE

7. What can be done to reduce inmate movement in a jail?

CREDIT: 1/2 hour credit for Jail Inservice Training requirement

ANSWER SHEET SHOULD BE RETAINED BY JAIL ADMINISTRATOR OR TRAINING OFFICER

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BRING PROGRAMS OR SERVICES TO INMATES IN THEIR HOUSING UNITS

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