

DATE:	JUNE 7, 2018
NUMBER:	J.2
SUBJECT:	SOBERING CELLS
RELATED SECTIONS:	I.52 , I.89 , MSD S.5 ; TITLE 24

PURPOSE

To ensure that sobering cells throughout Sheriff's detention facilities are used for their intended purpose.

POLICY

Sobering cells shall only be used for the holding of inmates who are a threat to their own safety or the safety of others and require a protective environment due to their state of intoxication (e.g., under the influence of drugs, alcohol, etc.). This excludes inmates who have life threatening withdrawal symptoms or need long-term detoxification. Sobering cells shall never be used for disciplinary purposes.

PROCEDURE

I. CAPACITY

Sobering cell capacity is governed by Part 2, Section 1231.2.4 of Title 24-Minimum Standards for Local Detention Facilities. Each facility shall draft a green sheet, outlining the capacities of its sobering cells and should include:

- A. 20 square feet of floor area per inmate.
- B. Limit of 8 inmates per cell.

II. PLACEMENT

- A. An inmate being placed in a sobering cell shall have all property removed, including removable rings, shoes, belts or any other article of clothing that could be used as a weapon or used to damage the cell. Clothing articles, such as pants, shirts, skirts or dresses that must be removed due to their construction, shall be replaced with appropriate jail-issued clothing.
- B. The steps outlined above are not for the purpose of conducting a visual inspection. If a deputy has reasonable suspicion to believe an inmate is concealing drugs or weapons in a manner that would not be detectible by a pat down search, they must follow the steps outlined in Detentions Policy and Procedure Section [I.52](#), Inmate Searches.
- C. Regardless of the inmate's booking status his/her property shall be inventoried, placed in a property bag, labeled and retained.
- D. Matches or igniters of any type, cigarettes, pencils, etc., are strictly prohibited in sobering cells.

III. REPORTS

- A. A Jail Information Management (JIMS) incident report, utilizing the SOB (sobering cell placement) incident code, shall be written on each inmate placed in a sobering cell.
 - 1. The incident report must clearly articulate the reasons for placement in the sobering cell.
 - 2. The report shall also indicate if any force was used (refer to I.89).
- B. The need for continued retention must be documented by sworn staff in a JIMS incident report, utilizing the SOU (sobering cell update) incident code, every 6 hours until the inmate is cleared from the sobering cell. Medical staff will provide input to the deputy responsible for writing the sobering cell update in JIMS.

IV. OBSERVATION

- A. An Inmate Observation Log (J-19A form) shall be maintained adjacent to the sobering cell. All checks, observations, assessments and reviews conducted by sworn and medical staff, will be documented on the J-19A form by filling out applicable fields (e.g., Arjis, date, time, inmate behavior, etc.).
- B. A nurse's assessment must be obtained, as soon as possible, or no later than 30 minutes after the initial placement. After the placement time, medical staff will check the inmate a minimum of every 4 hours. If the inmate remains in the sobering cell up to 12 hours from the time of the initial placement, then medical shall conduct an immediate assessment (MSD S.5).
- C. Sworn staff shall observe any inmate in a sobering cell at least every 20 to 30 minutes. Staff will document the observed behavior of the inmate and time of observation on the J-19A form.
- D. Each on-coming watch commander shall review documentation of observations and the inmate's condition at the beginning of each shift. The watch commander shall document their review of the J-19A form by signing his/her initials, the date and the time.
- E. An inmate shall be released from the sobering cell when he/she appears able to continue with processing.
- F. If it is observed by sworn or medical staff that an inmate's medical and/or mental status is declining, the watch commander will ensure the inmate is promptly evaluated by medical staff, and as soon as possible receive a psychiatric evaluation.
- G. For a placement greater than 24 hours, the watch commander will:
 - 1. Ensure a medical assessment is obtained by a medical physician or psychiatric doctor, who will be physically present, to determine if the inmate should remain in the sobering cell.

2. Confer with the medical physician and psychiatric doctor to determine if the inmate's condition warrants a transfer to the Emergency Department, MOB or Psychiatric Security Unit for further treatment and observation.

V. NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Deputies are responsible for providing meals during normal meal times. Meals provided to inmates in the sobering cell will consist of a sack lunch and a beverage, served in a disposable container. No metal is permitted inside the sobering cell. All offerings of meals will be documented on the Inmate Observation Log.

VI. SANITATION

Sobering cells shall be cleaned and disinfected immediately after every use, or in the event of constant use, shall be cleaned and disinfected at least once each shift. In the event an inmate soils (e.g., urinates, vomits, etc.) the sobering cell, it shall be cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible.

VII. FIRE SAFETY

- A. Some sobering cell materials are flammable, and when ignited, produce potentially lethal toxic smoke. Because of the great potential for injury and the loss of life represented by fires started in sobering cells, extreme care must be exercised to ensure that no matches or lighters enter sobering cells.
- B. Personnel responding to a fire in a sobering cell should be aware of the toxicity of the smoke and shall use a self-contained breathing apparatus when suppressing the fire or evacuating inmates. They shall immediately call the fire department of jurisdiction. Caution should be exercised when opening the door of an involved sobering cell to rescue its occupant(s).
- C. A fire hose or an extinguisher, of the appropriate type, shall be mounted within twenty (20) feet of every sobering cell.