

DATE:	DECEMBER 29, 2023
NUMBER:	J.1
SUBJECT:	SAFETY CELLS: DEFINITION AND USE
RELATED SECTIONS:	I.52 , J.4 , J.5 , M.25 , MSD S.10 ; TITLE 15 & 24

PURPOSE

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

POLICY

Incarcerated persons who have been assessed for Inmate Safety Program (ISP) housing in compliance with Detention Services Bureau Policies and Procedures (DSB P&P) section J.5 may be temporarily placed in a safety cell when they are actively self-harming or actively assaultive. Book and Release (B&R) individuals at risk for suicide may be temporarily placed in a safety cell even when not exhibiting active self-harming or active assaultive behaviors. The watch commander shall be notified of any safety cell placement.

Incarcerated persons returning from the Emergency Psychiatric Unit at San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital (EPU) with orders for Inmate Safety Program housing shall be housed according to DSB P&P J.5.

Safety cells are not to be used for punishment or a substitute for treatment.

DEFINITION

A safety cell is a single occupancy temporary housing unit constructed with a padded surface and other security features as outlined in Part 2, Section 1231.2.5 of Title 24 - Minimum Standards for Local Detention Facilities (refer to DSB P&P section J.5 for additionally related definitions).

PROCEDURE

I. PLACEMENT

- A. Incarcerated persons may be placed in a safety cell temporarily if they are actively self-harming or actively assaultive. B&R individuals may be temporarily placed in a safety cell even when not exhibiting active self-harming or active assaultive behaviors. If the individual is cooperative, all attempts should be made to obtain photos and fingerprints. A deputy will remain with the individual and escort them through the booking process prior to placement into a safety cell.

- B. An individual placed into a safety cell shall have all their personal clothing and any facility-provided property removed, including shoes, belts, wristband, etc. Clothing shall be stored in a secure location until the individual is cleared. Jewelry and body adornments shall be removed in accordance with DSB P&P Q.55. Personal property taken from an individual shall be sealed in a personal property bag, logged and retained in the property room. For security purposes, deputies will remain with the individual during the process to ensure all items listed above are removed.

- C. All incarcerated persons placed in a safety cell must be issued a safety garment.
 - 1. The safety garment is the only item of clothing they may possess while in the safety cell.
 - 2. The safety garment may only be removed from the individual when specific identifiable risks to their safety are displayed after the initial placement (e.g., tearing, swallowing, covering their mouth with the garment, etc.). When a safety garment is removed the following notifications shall be made:
 - a. The mental/medical health staff shall be notified immediately.
 - b. The watch commander shall be notified immediately.
 - c. The reason the safety garment was removed must be articulated in an incident report in the Jail Information Management System (JIMS).
 - 3. All safety garments shall be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

II. DOCUMENTATION

- A. A JIMS incident report, utilizing "SCP" (safety cell placement) as the primary incident type code, shall be written for each incarcerated person placed in a safety cell.
 - 1. Depending on the reason for placement, the following additional incident type codes shall be utilized:
 - a. Placement due to homicidal reasons the additional type code 1 shall be ZTH (ISP Type-Homicidal).
 - b. Placement due to self-injury reasons the additional type code 1 shall be ZTS (ISP Type-Self-Injury).
 - c. When staff determines the placement was due to either verbal or written communication, the additional type code 2 shall be ZMV (ISP Method-Verbal).
 - d. When staff determines the placement was due to active behavior, the additional type code 2 shall be ZMA (ISP Method-Active).
 - 2. The report shall also indicate if any force was used.
- B. The need for continued retention must be documented by sworn staff in a JIMS incident report, utilizing "SCU" (safety cell update) as the primary incident type code every four hours to document the facility gatekeeper's authorization for continued retention in a safety cell.

III. TRANSFERS

- A. If an incarcerated person is transferred from one facility to another for placement into a safety cell, the following procedures will be followed:
1. The deputy from the originating facility will articulate in a JIMS incident report (utilizing primary type code "SCP") the reason for the safety cell placement and will transport the individual to the new facility.
 2. Deputies assigned to the receiving facility will assume custody of the individual at intake/processing and will conduct the actual placement of the individual into a safety cell.
 3. The deputies conducting the safety cell placement will write a supplemental safety cell placement report in JIMS utilizing primary incident type code "SCU."

IV. MONITORING

- A. Staff shall closely monitor any incarcerated person placed in a safety cell. All checks, observations, assessments and reviews will be documented on the Observation Log (J-19A) form.
1. Every incarcerated person in a safety cell shall be directly observed by sworn staff at random intervals not to exceed 15 minutes between checks. Such observations shall be documented on the J-19A form. The individual should be observed for the following:
 - a. Responsiveness to verbal commands.
 - b. Difficulty in breathing.
 - c. Evidence of vomiting or any other condition that may require medical attention.
 - d. Deputies should be cognizant of the incarcerated person's physical condition. Health staff must be notified immediately if the individual exhibits any signs of medical distress, including agitated psychosis, and/or any other agitated chaotic event (ACE).
 - e. A medical doctor shall be contacted for an opinion anytime the individual's status or condition warrants an evaluation.
 2. Each incarcerated person shall have a nursing assessment within 30 minutes of placement into the safety cell. A medical assessment shall be completed every 24 hours thereafter or when clinically indicated. Such observations shall be documented on the J-19A form and in their health record.
 3. The facility gatekeeper shall observe the incarcerated person at least every four hours (from placement or last gatekeeper observation) to determine if continued retention in the safety cell is required. If any time within the four hours the facility

gatekeeper determines the individual is no longer actively self-harming or actively assaultive, they shall be moved from the safety cell in compliance with Section VI of this policy.

4. A mental health consultation by a Qualified Mental Health Provider (QMHP), to determine the individual's need for mental health services and suitability for retention in the safety cell, must occur within 12 hours of placement in a safety cell and no later than every 12 hours thereafter for as long as they remain in the safety cell.
5. At the beginning and end of their shift, the watch commander or designee shall directly observe every incarcerated person in a safety cell and review the J-19A form.

V. NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. Deputies are responsible for providing meals to an incarcerated person in a safety cell during normal mealtimes. The deputy providing the meal must ensure there are no items that the individual may use to inflict injury to self or cause damage to the cell, such as plastic utensils or plastic bags. All offerings or refusals of meals will be documented on the J-19A form.
- B. All food and water served to incarcerated persons in a safety cell shall be served in disposable containers.
- C. All offerings or refusal of water will be documented on the J-19A form using the checkboxes.
 1. Sworn staff shall offer water:
 - a. During normal mealtimes (breakfast, lunch, dinner).
 - b. When the incarcerated person is awake.
 - c. Upon request by the incarcerated person.
 2. The facility gatekeeper shall offer water during their observation of the incarcerated person, which is every four hours.

VI. REMOVAL

- A. If the facility gatekeeper determines the incarcerated person is no longer actively self-harming or actively assaultive, they shall be moved from the safety cell to EOH. Removal or clearance from the ISP is determined solely by a QMHP (refer to Medical Services Division Operations Manual Section S.10 for further details).
- B. B&R individuals removed from a safety cell will be cleared from the ISP for the purpose of release from custody. Individuals not seen by a QMHP and not cleared from ISP will be referred to EPU for further evaluation.

- C. If under exigent circumstances a watch commander determines to override the direction of the facility gatekeeper and requests the incarcerated person be retained in a safety cell, the watch commander is required to articulate why the individual was retained in a JIMS incident report.
- D. When the medical or mental health condition of an incarcerated person would be threatened by continued retention in any ISP housing, they shall immediately be removed and transported to an emergency department. If a watch commander removes an incarcerated person from ISP housing under such exigent circumstances and without consultation with a QMHP, the watch commander is required to articulate why the individual was removed in a JIMS incident report.
- E. If an incarcerated person is removed from the safety cell for the purpose of release from custody, the watch commander will consult with health staff and arrange for transportation of the individual to EPU in compliance with DSB P&P J.7.

VII. SANITATION

Safety cells shall be cleaned and disinfected using facility approved disinfectants or diluted bleach solution after every use and every 24 hours when occupied.

VIII. FIRE SAFETY

- A. Personnel responding to a fire in a safety cell should be aware of the toxicity of the smoke and shall use a self-contained breathing apparatus when suppressing the fire or evacuating incarcerated persons.
- B. A fire hose or a multi-purpose extinguisher shall be located within 20 feet of all safety cells.