

DATE:	FEBRUARY 16, 2022
NUMBER:	J.2
SUBJECT:	SOBERING CELLS: DEFINITION AND USE
RELATED SECTIONS:	I.52 , MSD S.5 ; TITLE 24

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines on the use of sobering cells in Sheriff's detention facilities.

POLICY

Sobering cells shall only be used for the holding of incarcerated persons 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 incarcerated persons 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 that should include:

- A. A minimum of 20 square feet of floor area per person.
- B. Limit of eight incarcerated persons per cell.

II. PLACEMENT

- A. An incarcerated person placed into a sobering cell shall have all property removed, including jewelry, shoes, belts or any other article of clothing that could be used as a weapon or used to damage the cell. Jewelry and body adornments shall be removed in compliance with Detention Services Bureau Policies and Procedures (DSB P&P) section Q.55. 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 incarcerated person is concealing drugs or weapons in a manner that would not be detectable by a pat down search, they must follow the steps outlined in DSB P&P [I.52](#).
- C. Regardless of the incarcerated person's booking status, their property shall be inventoried, placed in a property bag, labeled and retained in the property room.
- D. Matches or igniters of any type, cigarettes, pencils, etc., are strictly prohibited in sobering cells.

III. REPORTS

- A. A Jail Information Management System (JIMS) incident report, utilizing the "SOB" (sobering cell placement) incident code, shall be written for each incarcerated person 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.
- 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 six hours until the incarcerated person is cleared from the sobering cell. Health staff will provide input to the deputy responsible for writing the sobering cell update in JIMS.

IV. OBSERVATION

- A. An Observation Log (J-19A) form shall be maintained adjacent to the sobering cell. All checks, observations, assessments and reviews conducted by sworn and health staff will be documented on the J-19A form by filling out applicable fields (e.g., ARJIS, date, time, incarcerated person's 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, health staff will check the incarcerated person a minimum of every four hours in accordance with Standardized Nursing Procedure SNP.A.3. If the incarcerated person remains in the sobering cell up to 12 hours from the time of the initial placement, health staff shall conduct an immediate assessment in accordance with Medical Services Division Operations Manual Section MSD S.5.
- C. Sworn staff shall observe any incarcerated person in a sobering cell at least every 20 to 30 minutes. Staff will document their observed behavior and time of observation on the J-19A form.
- D. Each on-coming watch commander shall review documentation of observations and the incarcerated person's condition at the beginning of each shift. The watch commander shall document their review of the J-19A form by signing their initials, the date and the time.
- E. An incarcerated person shall be released from the sobering cell when they appear able to continue with processing.
- F. If it is observed by sworn or health staff that an incarcerated person's medical and/or mental status is declining, the watch commander will ensure the incarcerated person is promptly evaluated by health 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 doctor and/or psychiatrist, who will be physically present, to determine if the incarcerated person should remain in the sobering cell.
 2. Confer with the medical doctor and/or psychiatrist to determine if the incarcerated person's condition warrants a transfer to an emergency department, Medical Observation Housing or Psychiatric Stabilization Unit for further treatment and observation.

V. NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. Deputies are responsible for providing meals during normal mealtimes.
- B. Meals provided to incarcerated persons in the sobering cell will consist of a sack lunch and a beverage, served in a disposable container.
- C. No metal is permitted inside the sobering cell.
- D. All offerings of meals will be documented on the J-19A form.

VI. SANITATION

Sobering cells shall be cleaned and disinfected immediately after every use, or in the event of constant use at least once each shift. In the event an incarcerated person soils (i.e., urinates, vomits, etc.) the sobering cell, it shall be cleaned and disinfected as soon as safely 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 incarcerated persons. 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 20 feet of every sobering cell.