

**San Diego County Sheriff's Department Detention Services Bureau – Manual of Policies and Procedures**

<b>DATE:</b>	APRIL 21, 2023
<b>NUMBER:</b>	J.5
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	SUICIDE PREVENTION PRACTICES FOR INCARCERATED PERSONS & DETENTIONS SAFETY PROGRAM
<b>RELATED SECTIONS:</b>	<a href="#">J.1</a> , <a href="#">J.3</a> , <a href="#">J.4</a> , <a href="#">M.25</a> , <a href="#">MSD S.10</a>

PURPOSE

To set forth procedures for detention staff to identify those incarcerated persons who may be an elevated risk for self-harm or suicide.

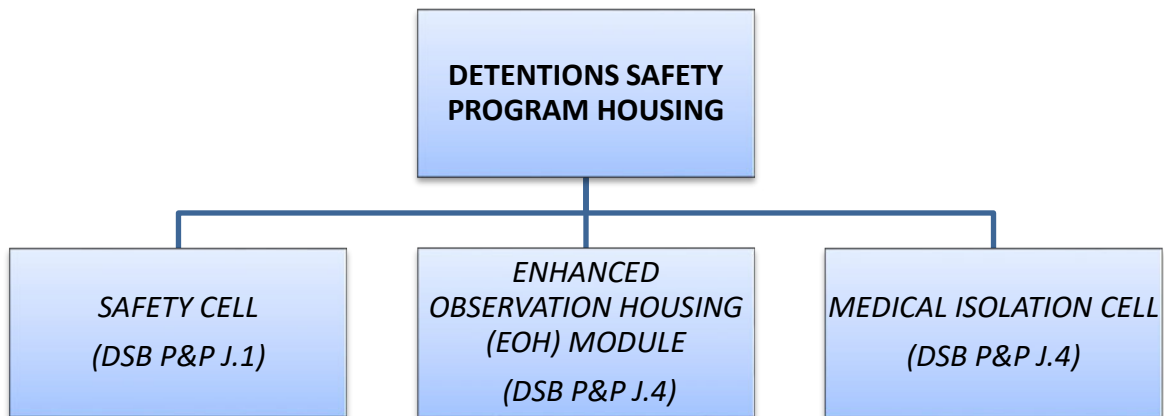
POLICY

Incarcerated persons who are recognized and observed as being a potential self-harm or suicide risk shall be assessed for consideration of placement into one of the defined Detentions Safety Program (DSP) housing options as further described in Detention Services Bureau Policies and Procedures (DSB P&P) J.1 and J.4. Sworn staff shall immediately notify health staff and the watch commander of any incarcerated person that presents a potential or actual danger to self, danger to others or is unable to care for self.

Suicide risk assessment for the DSP will be conducted by the facility gatekeeper. The gatekeeper is a Qualified Mental Health Provider (QMHP) or assigned designee in their absence.

DEFINITIONS

DSP housing is defined as placement into any of the following housing options for the purpose of providing proper intervention, close observation and assessment of persons who may be at an elevated risk for suicide.



**Qualified Mental Health Provider (QMHP)** - Refers to a Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Licensed Mental Health Clinician (MHC), Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner (PNP), or contracted Psychiatric Registered Nurse (PRN).

**Assigned Designee** - Refers to staff assigned to perform certain tasks when a QMHP is not present in the facility. The assigned designee will be an assigned registered nurse for the shift at each facility.

Sworn staff should be familiar with the following definitions:

**Suicidal Ideation** - Thinking about, considering or planning suicide.

**Self-Harm** – The act of deliberately causing destruction and/or damage to one's body.

**Suicide Attempt** - A non-fatal, self-directed, potentially injurious behavior with intent to die as a result of the behavior; suicide attempts might not result in injury. This includes behavior that would likely have resulted in death or serious injury had staff not intervened.

**Suicide** - Death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with intent to die as a result of the behavior.

## PROCEDURE

### I. RISK FACTORS FOR DSP HOUSING ASSESSMENT

- A. The following are identified high suicide risk factors that, when identified, require further assessment by the facility gatekeeper for consideration of placement into DSP housing:
1. High publicity case with possible evasion of arrest or SWAT/SED standoff with serious felony charges including, but not limited to, homicide, rape or child-victim crimes.
  2. Severe, life or death sentences.
  3. The incarcerated person states they are suicidal and/or makes suicidal statements, either verbally or in writing, to others (e.g., family members, sworn staff, health staff, processing staff, counseling staff, reentry services staff, volunteers, clergy, etc.).
  4. Previous suicide attempts (within the past five years).
  5. Staff observation of depressed/emotional turmoil.
- B. Other risk factors that could cause circumstantial concerns and may initiate an assessment for consideration of placement into DSP housing include, but are not limited to, the following:
1. History of psychiatric illness
  2. First time offender

3. Intoxication/withdrawal
4. Severe aggressiveness
5. Physical signs of depression (e.g., sadness, crying, withdrawal/silence, sudden loss or gain in appetite, insomnia, mood variations, lethargy, etc.).

## II. ASSESSMENT FOR PLACEMENT INTO DSP HOUSING

- A. All incarcerated persons requiring an assessment and consideration for placement into DSP housing due to suicidal risk shall be evaluated by the facility gatekeeper.
- B. If the facility gatekeeper determines the incarcerated persons requires placement into the DSP, they shall determine the appropriate DSP housing (e.g., safety cell vs. EOH). Actively self-harming or actively assaultive incarcerated persons may be temporarily placed in a safety cell (refer to DSB P&P J.1). The watch commander shall be notified of placements into DSP.
- C. If under exigent circumstances a watch commander determines an incarcerated person requires placement in DSP housing without consultation or recommendation from the facility gatekeeper, the watch commander is required to articulate why the person was placed using a Jail Information Management System (JIMS) incident report.
- D. All calls through the Mental Health Advocacy Hotline will be answered by a detentions information assistant (DIA) assigned to the San Diego Central Jail (SDCJ). The DIA will complete the Mental Health Advocacy Hotline caller log. The information received will be shared, without delay, with the on-duty watch commander at the incarcerated person's assigned housing facility. The watch commander will contact the on-duty gatekeeper to determine the individual's need for a mental health evaluation.

## III. INCARCERATED PERSONS PLACED IN A SAFETY CELL (REFER TO DSB P&P J.1)

## IV. INCARCERATED PERSONS PLACED IN AN ENHANCED OBSERVATION HOUSING MODULE OR MEDICAL ISOLATION (REFER TO DSB P&P J.4)

## V. INCARCERATED PERSONS PLACED IN THE PSYCHIATRIC STABILIZATION UNIT (REFER TO DSB P&P M.25)

## VI. DURING INTAKE

Every person shall be screened during the intake process for the self-harm risk factors indicated in section I and assessed in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy. If the facility gatekeeper determines placement into DSP housing is required, the following shall occur:

1. Actively self-harming or actively assaultive persons may temporarily be placed in a safety cell. (Refer to DSB P&P J.1)

2. Individuals not actively self-harming and not actively assaultive may be housed in EOH, except arrestees with a Book and Release (B&R) status (refer to DSB P&P J.4).
3. Sworn staff shall notify the watch commander of the DSP placement.
4. When an individual is medically unstable, the facility shall medically reject the person and refer the arresting officer to a hospital emergency department (ED) for evaluation.
5. If the individual is in urgent need of an assessment with a psychiatrist for immediate psychotropic medication to control symptoms of aggression or psychosis, the person will be medically rejected, and the arresting officer will be referred to the Emergency Psychiatric Unit at the San Diego County Psychiatric Hospital (EPU) for evaluation. Individuals initially rejected from the Vista Detention Facility (VDF) will be transported to SDCJ (males) or Las Colinas Detention and Reentry Facility (females) after the evaluation at EPU.
6. For individuals/incarcerated persons with suicidal risk evaluated by an EPU psychiatrist and returning to a facility:
  - a. The EPU psychiatrist orders the individual/incarcerated person to be admitted to a psychiatric stabilization unit, the incarcerated person shall be housed according to the order (refer to DSB P&P M.25).
  - b. If the EPU psychiatrist recommends DSP housing and/or safety restrictions (e.g., a recommendation for a safety cell placement or no safety garment) the facility gatekeeper shall determine the appropriate DSP housing and/or safety restrictions. When EOH is deemed appropriate instead of a safety cell, the facility gatekeeper will call the EPU psychiatrist for further consultation and an updated order.

## VII. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- A. All requests for DSP assessments will be documented by sworn staff in a JIMS incident report (refer to DSB P&P section F.5). The incident report will articulate the reason an DSP assessment was requested and the subsequent outcome. For assessments that result in safety cell or EOH placements (refer to DSB P&P sections J.1 and J.4).
- B. All incidents of actual (or attempt) self-harm or attempt suicide that occur within a detention facility shall be reported by sworn staff in NetRMS.
  1. All initial reports written for actual (or attempt) self-harm or attempt suicide will use the offense code, "981155 – ZZ – Self-Harm Incident (Jails Only)."

2. Once approved by the sworn supervisor, the case report, all available video footage and the incarcerated person's health record will be reviewed by a Chief Mental Health Clinician (CMHC).
3. If after review, the CMHC determines the incident to be a suicide attempt, the reporting officer will be notified to change the offense code to, "93000 – ZZ – Suicide Attempt."

#### VIII. POST SELF-HARM OR SUICIDE ATTEMPTS (WHILE IN CUSTODY)

- A. For an incarcerated person that does not require transportation to the ED, the person will be evaluated by facility health staff and assessed by the facility gatekeeper for DSP housing.
- B. For an incarcerated person that requires immediate treatment for physical medical problems, the person shall be transported to the closest ED. Once discharged from the ED and upon arrival to the detention facility, the incarcerated person shall be evaluated by a psychiatrist, if available, or the facility QMHP. The psychiatrist or QMHP will determine the appropriate housing assignment. . In the event there is no QMHP at the facility to conduct an evaluation, transporting staff shall transport the incarcerated person to an Emergency Psychiatric Unit (EPU) for evaluation and recommendation for appropriate housing.
- C. Admission into the Psychiatric Stabilization Unit (PSU) (either at San Diego Central Jail or Las Colinas Detention and Reentry Facility) can be ordered by the Sheriff's attending psychiatrist. If such an order is made, the watch commander and discharging hospital will be advised.

#### IX. REMOVAL/CLEARANCE FROM THE DETENTIONS SAFETY PROGRAM

- A. Incarcerated persons can be moved from one housing assignment to another within the DSP based on the observations and direction of the facility gatekeeper. An incarcerated person who is no longer self-harming or actively assaultive shall be moved from a safety cell to EOH and conversely, an incarcerated person that becomes actively self-harming or actively assaultive may be moved from EOH to a safety cell.
- B. If under exigent circumstances a watch commander determines the need to override the direction of the facility gatekeeper and requests the person be retained in DSP housing, the watch commander is required to articulate why the person was retained in a JIMS incident report.
- C. Removal/clearance from the DSP is determined solely by a QMHP (refer to Medical Services Division Operations Manual Section S.10 for further details).
- D. When the medical or mental health condition of an incarcerated person would be threatened by continued retention in any DSP housing, the person shall immediately be removed and transported to an ED. If a watch commander removes an incarcerated person from DSP housing under such exigent circumstances and without consultation with a QMHP, the watch commander is required to articulate why the person was removed in a JIMS incident report.