

## 5-02-060 Suicide Prevention Program

**Reference:** CDM 5-07/010.00, 5-07/020.00; 5-11/060.00; CCR Title 15, Section 3031

### **PURPOSE OF ORDER:**

The purpose of this order is to establish guidelines regarding a plan for a suicide prevention program at Pitchess Detention Center (PDC) South Facility.

### **SCOPE OF ORDER:**

This order applies to all personnel assigned to, and working at PDC South.

### **ORDER:**

A serious attempt by an inmate to take their life will often occur when custodial personnel are least likely to discover the inmate's attempt before it is too late. Typically, times for such an occurrence would be at night, immediately following the officer's security check, or when custodial personnel are preoccupied with other duties. Recent studies in the Los Angeles County Jail reveal that over 90% of all completed suicides occurred in the late afternoon and early morning hours.

When an inmate attempts suicide during the day or just prior to the time the officer is scheduled to check the area, the inmate could be purposely trying to be seen and prevented from carrying out a successful suicide. Attempts of this type should be taken seriously and not viewed as just an attempt to get attention. The second attempt could be fatal. Any expression of suicidal actions or thoughts, or any talk of suicide, should be brought to the immediate attention of a supervisor and to medical and mental health staff.

### **BEHAVIORAL OBSERVATION AND MENTAL HEALTH REFERRAL FORM**

PDC South personnel who identify an inmate either through observation, information received from another person (e.g., relative, clergy, etc.) or intake screening, who expresses suicidal ideation by word or by action, or exhibits unusual behavior which could result in a suicide or an attempted suicide, shall complete a Behavioral Observation and Mental Health Referral (BOMHR) (SH-J-407) form. Sections 1 through 6, including the "circumstances" narrative section on the reverse side shall be completed.

In cases where custody personnel believe that the actual act of attempting suicide has not occurred, wherein;

- An inmate commits an act resulting in only superficial "hesitation mark" injuries that are visible
- The severity of the injury does not support a life threatening injury
- The inmate has not displayed the desire to commit suicide

The category, "Threat to Commit Suicide and/or Feigned Suicidal Gestures" shall be selected in section 5, "Suicidal Assessment" of the BOMHR form. The use of this category shall only be authorized by the watch commander. (Refer to Custody Division Manual [CDM] section 4-05/000.00 Behavioral Observation and Mental Health Referral).

If this section is selected, an Incident Report (SH-R- 49) is not required. A Custody Division reference number shall be issued and the BOMHR form shall be the only report, barring any unusual circumstances. The BOMHR form shall accompany the inmate to Mental Health staff, who will make the final determination as to whether the inmate actually attempted suicide.

If mental health personnel later determine that the overt act is a sincere suicide attempt, then the attempt suicide procedures shall apply and all the required reports shall be completed. Mental health personnel will determine the appropriate housing locations.

All personnel shall strictly adhere to CDM section 4-05/000.00, Behavioral Observation and Mental Health Referral, regarding the initiation of the BOMHR form.

#### JAIL MENTAL EVALUATION TEAM

When a South Facility staff member encounters an inmate whom they feel may need the attention of a mental health specialist, the appropriate Jail Mental Evaluation Team (JMET) shall be notified. JMET referrals shall be logged at the PDC South Clinic. Arrangements shall be made by JMET to interview the inmate in question to assess his mental health needs.

The JMET assigned to PDC facilities can generally be reached Monday through Friday during the early PM shift hours by contacting the North County Correctional Facility's (NCCF) main control.

When the identification of a suicidal or potentially suicidal inmate occurs after hours and JMET is not available to evaluate the inmate, it shall be the responsibility of the watch commander to determine the appropriate method of transportation to the Inmate Reception Center (IRC) for appropriate mental health evaluation.

#### SUICIDE INTERVENTION

In the event of the discovery of an attempt or completed suicide personnel shall:

- Call for assistance and notify South Facility main control (South David)
- Notify the South Clinic medical personnel and request paramedics if necessary
- Lockdown the immediate area
- Obtain the suicide intervention kit
- In the case of hanging, use the "cut down tool," from the suicide intervention kit to immediately cut down the inmate. The preservation of life should be the primary consideration
- Monitor the inmate's airway, breathing, and circulation
- Render first aid and/or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if necessary

Each staff station has been assigned a suicide intervention kit. The suicide intervention kit is contained in a white waterproof container with red stenciling on the sides labeled "SUICIDE INTERVENTION KIT." The suicide intervention kit shall only be removed from the staff station to assist in suicide intervention or during

suicide intervention drills. The suicide intervention kit contains the following items:

- Cut down tool - Caution should be exercised whenever the suicide intervention kit is deployed. The cut down tool is a security risk and should be accounted for at all times.
- CPR mask
- Two towels
- Latex gloves

Personnel assigned to the staff station shall inspect the suicide intervention kit at the beginning of their shift to ensure the tamper-resistant tape is intact. This inspection shall be documented in the Uniform Daily Activity Log (UDAL) book. If the tamper-resistant tape is broken or the kit appears to have been opened, notification to a supervisor shall be made. When the suicide intervention kit has been deployed, or has been opened for any reason, the supervisor shall inspect the container to ensure all of the above listed items are present, and apply new tamper-resistant tape.

#### POST SUICIDE ATTEMPT FOLLOW-UP

Subsequent to an attempted suicide, personnel shall:

- Arrange for the inmate to be escorted to the South Facility medical clinic for evaluation
- Arrange for the inmate to be seen by JMET
- If necessary, transport the inmate to the appropriate hospital designated by medical personnel for further treatment
- After treatment and/or evaluation, escort the inmate to the appropriate housing location as directed by JMET
- Give the inmate a blue wristband marked with an "S" (Suicidal)

#### REQUIRED REPORTS

- Incident Report (SH-R-49)
- BOMHR (SH-J-407)
- Inmate Injury Report (SH-J-212)
- Special Handling Request (SH-J-181)

Refer to CDM section 4-07/010.00, Notification and Reporting of Significant Incidents.

#### NOTIFICATIONS OF AN ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

In cases where an inmate has been sent to IRC for a psychological evaluation, and JMET staff determines that an attempted suicide was a sincere attempt, JMET staff shall notify the Twin Towers Correctional Facility (TTCF) watch sergeant of the suicide attempt. The TTCF watch sergeant will call the South Facility watch sergeant and notify him of the change in the inmate's status.

The South Facility watch sergeant shall assign staff to complete a SH-R-49 documenting the inmate's attempted suicide. The South Facility watch sergeant will also provide the TTCF watch sergeant with the uniform reporting number (URN) of that SH-R-49 so TTCF personnel can complete the BOMHR form.

The primary goal of this procedure is the timely and effective handling, treatment, and housing of inmates who attempt suicide and to ensure that the inmate and the BOMHR form remain together from initial observation to final mental health housing, including the medical assessment, during any transportation, and during the mental health assessment.

### SAFETY CHECKS

Inmates at South Facility who have been identified as potentially suicidal shall be immediately reassigned to the proper custody facility at the direction of Jail Mental Health Services. During transition, inmates who are suicidal or display suicidal tendencies shall be subject to safety checks conducted every 15 minutes, or more frequently as directed by Jail Mental Health Services. Safety checks shall be conducted at least ten minutes apart from each other.

### PERSONAL ITEMS

Inmates classified as "Suicidal" shall not be issued any clothing, bedding, sheets, towels, or t-shirts, or any material which could be used to fashion ligatures. These inmates shall not be issued any personal hygiene or other items that could be used to self-inflict injury (e.g., combs, razors, etc.).

Deputies shall make every effort to ensure that all items that may be used as instruments for accomplishing suicides are removed from the concerned inmate's environment.

### SUICIDE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION DRILLS

Custody Training Standards Bureau (CTSB) shall conduct random drills of each custody facility in regard to the handling of suicidal inmates and suicide prevention.

The scenarios shall also involve practical applications of first aid and CPR procedures. These drills shall be conducted quarterly and the records shall be maintained at each custody facility's training unit.

CTSB shall also be responsible for the development and routine distribution of instructional bulletins detailing suicide and attempted suicide prevention and handling.

---