

07-044/05 Handling Mentally Ill Inmates

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Unit Order: #07-044/05	
CUSTODY SERVICES DIVISION	Effective Date: 01-01-1998
GENERAL POPULATION	Reviewed Date:
NORTH COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY	
Subject: Handling Mentally Ill Inmates	
Reference: CAC Title 15, Section 1052; CDM 5-04/020.00, 4-05/000.00; UO 07-170/35	
Unit Commander Signature:	Date:

PURPOSE OF ORDER: The purpose of this unit order is to establish specific guidelines for handling mentally ill inmates.

SCOPE OF ORDER: This order applies to all personnel assigned to and/or working at the North County Correctional Facility (NCCF).

ORDER:

NCCF personnel have a duty to defend and protect themselves from injury when confronted with a mentally ill inmate. When confronted with an immediate threat to their safety or the safety of others, personnel shall take necessary and reasonable actions to defend themselves and control the inmate.

When a staff member encounters an inmate whom they feel may need the attention of a mental health clinician, the Jail Mental Evaluation Team (JMET) shall be notified via the NCCF Infirmary. Members of JMET shall interview the inmate in question to assess his mental health needs. In no way does this preclude any custody

personnel from taking emergent action if they perceive an inmate needs immediate attention.

No inmate shall be unduly delayed in receiving a medical evaluation by JMET. If the watch commander determines a medical evaluation will cause an unnecessary delay in the movement of the inmate, then the watch commander may authorize the immediate transport of the inmate to the IRC main clinic where a medical evaluation shall occur. The name of the watch commander making this authorization shall be noted on the Behavioral Observation and Mental Health Referral (BOMHR) form (SH-J-407).

The following guidelines shall apply when deputy personnel encounter a mentally ill inmate unless circumstances dictate alternative action:

1. The Deputy or Custody Assistant having the initial contact with the inmate shall notify the Building Supervising Line Deputy (Senior) of the inmate's status. If he or she concurs a mental health assessment is needed, the senior shall assign a prowler to escort the inmate to the infirmary.
2. Once in the infirmary, the prowler will notify JMET who will evaluate the inmate. If the JMET is not available, the inmate will be evaluated by the medical staff.
3. The Infirmary Deputy shall notify the Infirmary Sergeant who will respond and assess the inmate to determine if he presents a threat. If so, the inmate shall be handcuffed.
4. Once it has been determined the inmate needs further evaluation, he shall be transferred to Twin Towers ASAP, either via radio car or by TST.
5. If an inmate is summoned to the infirmary by either JMET or the Medical staff for an evaluation, the person who initiated the pass shall notify the Infirmary Deputy about the inmate's status. The infirmary deputy shall then notify the Infirmary Sergeant who will respond and conduct a threat assessment.
6. If at any time an inmate becomes agitated, hostile or combative, the officer having contact with the inmate should contact JMET and have them respond to intervene. A camcorder should be used to begin documenting the behavior.

If JMET is not available, the officer shall contact his/her senior and the Infirmary Sergeant before attempting to control the inmate (unless the inmate physically engages personnel). If the inmate becomes combative, officers shall use whatever force is necessary to protect themselves or gain control of the inmate. While adhering to all department policies regarding the use of force. In any case the senior and the Infirmary Sergeant shall be notified.

NOTE: Use good communication skills (Do not shout – lower your voice, using a firm but compassionate tone). If force is necessary, consider O.C. Spray as an option. Use a swarm technique if you have sufficient personnel. JMET should be used in the tactical control of inmate whenever possible.

Revision Date

01/01/1998 NCCF
