



# Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Governor Tony Evers | Secretary Kevin A. Carr

## Office of Detention Facilities

December 6, 2021

Sheriff Jeffrey Wallace  
Rusk County Sheriff's Department  
311 E. miner Ave, Suite L 100  
Ladysmith, WI 54848

### **Re: 2021 Annual Inspection**

Dear Sheriff Wallace:

On October 13, 2021, the annual inspection of the Rusk County Jail was conducted pursuant to WI Statute 301.37(3). The inspection compared the facility and its operation to applicable state statutes and Department of Corrections Administrative Code Chapter DOC 350. This inspection consisted of a tour of the facility; interviews with administration, staff and inmates; review of inmate files; and a review of facility records and documentation.

### **Changes Since Previous Inspection**

- Purchased and installed Tek-84 body scanner
- Added inmate phone services from Tech Friends/CIDNET; dropped Securus
- Added an online jail roster to website that is updated every morning.
- Purchased a Skytron ultraviolet light disinfecting unit.
- Three new jailer/dispatchers hired
- Restored Huber - still using EMP for those who qualify

### **Goals and Initiatives**

- Return to full staff
- Getting all new hires to Jail School and through training
- Increasing staff training
- Taking steps moving toward PREA compliance
- Upgrading Jail Camera System
- Update current jail policy and procedure manual
- County board looking at building study project; developed an Ad Hoc Committee to seek RFP on project management

## **Summary of Jail Operations**

I met with the administrative, security, and healthcare staff to conduct the annual inspection. The inspection included a review of records and practices, as well as a walkthrough of the detention area to assess the safety, sanitation, adequacy, and fitness of the facility. My observations during the inspection revealed cordial and professional interactions between the staff and persons in custody. Captain Murray and his staff are to be commended for the positive feedback and facility climate.

As referenced in past inspections, the jail is old and antiquated, limiting the opportunity to provide programming and education, along with meeting safety and security expectations. The facility lacks the proper space needed for booking in new inmates, providing proper classification, and housing individuals on suicide watch, as there are only two receiving cells for the whole facility. The lack of receiving cells in the facility also makes it very difficult for staff to have inmates change clothing when being booked into the jail. If the two receiving cells are occupied, staff have an inmate step into a closet area to change over. Also, the medical room just off the booking area is very small, making it hard for medical staff to provide treatment and examinations while also having adequate space for administrative duties and properly securing confidential medical records.

Also, due to the facility design and lack of proper housing options, the facility received its second violation in two years for mixing classification. If this code requirement cannot be met, then the agency will need to consider housing these inmates with another county.

Another area of concern is that professional visitors are brought into the secure perimeter of the jail to meet with inmates in person. This practice is a security and safety concern as it does not provide any physical barrier from the inmate in the case an inmate was to become assaultive or disruptive.

While conducting a walkthrough of the detention areas, it was noted that there are no intercoms in the inmate living areas. Inmates reported that if there is an emergency, they need to yell or wave at the cameras to get staff's attention. This is of concern and an area you may want to consider when upgrading the facility.

In addition to the above issues, the jail and the dispatch center are combined and centrally located within the jail. This makes it difficult to provide proper staff supervision with the added responsibilities when 911 calls come into the jail. This often takes staff away from jail duties and negatively affects overall safety and security. As referenced in past inspections, it is recommended that control center and dispatch be separated so staff can focus on their jail duties.

Although most issues are addressed in a timely manner, it should be noted that the needs of the facility are more than general upkeep and an occasional issue. The facility is over 30 years old and since it opened, corrections has changed dramatically. There should be thought given to future needs of the facility when it comes to conditions of confinement, housing options for classification, programming, and efficiency.

The maximum rated capacity of the facility is 52. On the day of the inspection, there were 37 inmates incarcerated in the facility. The Rusk County Jail is approved for double celling per DOC 350.20 and is not approved to house juveniles.

### **Programs**

The following programs are provided to both male and female inmates:

- WITC basic education
- Anger Management
- Aurora AODA
- Bible studies - a few different congregations
- Pregnancy Resource Center - parenting class
- Sunday church service
- 12 Step
- AA
- NA
- Embrace Victims' Services
- STI testing
- Inmate Work Program
- Mobile Crisis

### **Variances**

- Rusk County Jail has one variance on file with the Department.

### **Administrative Codes Found Not in Compliance**

- **Administrative Code DOC 350.07(7) *Physical environment of jails constructed before March 1, 1990***

On the day of inspection, there were inmates with different security classifications being housed together in a dormitory.

This is a repeat violation from last year. Although the Rusk County Jail lacks the adequate space needed, jail staff still need to ensure that inmates that are housed together are of the same security classification.

### **Approval**

The Rusk County Jail is approved by the Department of Corrections for the secure detention of adult inmates with the maximum capacity of 52.

I wish to thank Captain Murray and his staff for their assistance, cooperation and professionalism during the inspection process.

If you have any questions regarding the inspection results summarized in this letter or any other correctional matters, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Hoover", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brad Hoover  
Detention Facilities Specialist

cc: Captain Murray, Jail Administrator  
Greg Bucholtz, Director-ODF  
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