



Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Governor Tony Evers | Secretary Kevin A. Carr

Office of Detention Facilities

Date: October 20, 2022

Sheriff Jeff Wallace
Rusk County Sheriff's Department
311 E. Miner Ave. Suite L100
Ladysmith, WI 54848

RE: 2022 Annual Inspection

Facility Name: Rusk County Jail
Address: 311 E. Miner Ave. Suite L100
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Facility Type and Applicable Wisconsin Administrative Code:

- Juvenile Detention Facility (Chapter DOC 346)
- Secured Residential Care Center for Children and Youth (Chapter DOC 347)
- Huber Facility (Chapter DOC 348)
- Municipal Lockup Facility (Chapter DOC 349)
- Jail (Chapter DOC 350)

Date of Inspection: October 6, 2022 **Inspected By:** Brad Hoover

Inspection Process: The annual inspection of the facility 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. This inspection consisted of a tour of the facility to assess the safety, sanitation, adequacy, and fitness of the facility; dialogue with staff and inmates; and a review of facility records and documentation.

Approved Capacity Details

Maximum Rated Capacity	Population on the Day of Inspection	Is Facility Approved to Double Cell	Is Facility Approved to Hold Juveniles
52	38	Yes	No

Inspection Results:

The Following Administrative Codes were found to be 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 for three years. 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. As was discussed during the inspection closeout with Captain Murray, the facility will have to submit a written compliance plan to this office by November 30, 2022 that outlines what additional procedural steps will be taken to address this longstanding issue.

- **Administrative Code DOC 350.12(1) Sanitation and Hygiene**

The following issues were discussed with Captain Murray during the inspection closeout:

- Various ceiling tiles were broken or damaged throughout the facility. These will need to be repaired or replaced.
- The showers in the inmate living areas show wear and tear and are in need of attention. One shower was leaking through the wall into the main hallway. Maintenance should address this issue immediately.
- The carpeting in the conference room and the media room are stained and damaged. They should be removed and replaced with a product more suitable for a confinement setting.

Inspection Comments:

I met with various staff members 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 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, storage and properly securing confidential medical records.

Also, due to the facility design and lack of proper housing options., this is the third consecutive inspection documenting a violation regarding housing inmates with mixed classification. As referenced above, the facility will have to submit a written compliance plan to this office by November 30, 2022 that outlines what additional procedural steps will be taken to address this longstanding issue.

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.

During the inspection, it was brought to my attention that the senior center will not be providing meals in the near future. Captain Murray stated that they will be using an outside restaurant to provide meals once that happens. Although the jail can do this, it provides a short-term solution for various reasons that were discussed with Captain Murray during the inspection closeout. It is recommended that the jail consider bringing back the kitchen into the jail for operational efficiency and to eliminate any potential issues in the future.

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.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Captain Murray and your staff for their cooperation during this inspection process. If you have any questions regarding this report or any other matter please feel free to 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, Inspector
Office of Detention Facilities

Cc: George Murray, Captain
Greg Bucholtz, ODF Director
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