

---

# **CITY OF SAN ANTONIO**

## **OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR**



Audit of San Antonio Police Department

Detention Center

Project No. AU17-020

May 24, 2018

Kevin W. Barthold, CPA, CIA, CISA  
City Auditor

---

## Executive Summary

---

As part of our annual Audit Plan approved by City Council, we conducted an audit of the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD), specifically the Detention Center operations. The audit objective, conclusion, and recommendations follow:

**Determine if SAPD's Detention Center operations are effective and efficient and in compliance with existing procedures, contracts/interlocal agreements, and regulations.**

Detention Center operations are not in compliance with existing policies and procedures which hinders the effectiveness of operations.

Areas for improvement include:

- Length of custody for arrestees in the Detention Center prior to transfer to the Bexar County jail is excessive.
- Frequency of cell checks is not in compliance with department standards.
- Practices for medical evaluations and use of force incident documentation are not consistent.
- Staff training for crisis intervention and use of force should be expanded.
- The IT systems in place at the Detention Center do not provide adequate functionality for efficient processing and reporting of Detention Center activity.
- User access to IT systems is excessive.

Additionally, Bexar County has not paid the City its agreed-upon share of fiscal year 2017 Detention Center operating expenses amounting to \$1.6 million. Monthly payments for fiscal year 2018 have also not been paid.

We have made recommendations to SAPD Management to address each of these issues. SAPD Management agreed with the audit findings and recommendations and has developed positive action plans to address them. Management's verbatim response is in Appendix B on page 10.

## Table of Contents

---

Executive Summary .....	i
Background.....	1
Audit Scope and Methodology .....	2
Audit Results and Recommendations .....	3
A. Custody in Excess of 18 Hours .....	3
B. Cell Checks.....	4
C. Medical Evaluations and Use of Force .....	5
D. Crisis Intervention and Use of Force Training.....	6
E. Payments for Operations .....	6
F. MAGS System Functionality .....	7
G. User Access .....	7
Appendix A – Staff Acknowledgement.....	9
Appendix B – Management Response.....	10

## Background

---

The Detention Center processed approximately 65,000 arrested persons in fiscal year 2017.<sup>1</sup> The facility is open 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. As of October 1, 2016, an SAPD Captain is assigned oversight of operations and staff. The Detention Center officers search arrested persons on arrival, inventory their personal property, monitor them, and prepare them for transfer or release. Training includes skills for crisis intervention and use of force. When fully staffed, the Detention Center has 43 employees as shown below.

<b>Detention Center Civilian Personnel</b>	
Detention & Security Manager	1
Detention Center Manager	1
Assistant Detention Center Manager	1
Detention Center Supervisor	6
Detention Center Officers	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>

Source: SAPD

Additionally, Municipal Court warrant officers have an essential role at the Detention Center, with responsibilities including data entry, facilitating arrested persons' appearance in Municipal Court via video conferencing (for fine-only Class C misdemeanors), verifying that warrants were properly executed, and accepting Municipal Court payments for fines, fees, and bonds.

The City and the County share the costs of operations. Additionally, the cost of staffing the Detention Center with nurses from the University Health System is divided between the two agencies. These nurses are vital in determining if arrested persons are accepted into the Detention Center or rejected until external medical clearances are received. Additionally, by providing certain medical treatments, nurses help divert arresting officers and arrested persons from unnecessary trips to emergency rooms.

At the Detention Center, Bexar County is responsible for booking all arrested persons who are charged with committing a Class B misdemeanor or higher. Magistration services for these arrested persons are provided by Bexar County judges. Other services the County provides at the Detention Center include mental health assessments, assistance with personal recognizance bonds, and indigent mental health representation.

---

<sup>1</sup> The majority of these arrested persons are held at the Detention Center; however, a small number are processed via video conferencing from the Bexar Co. jail or the Bexar County Pretrial Services satellite office.

## Audit Scope and Methodology

---

The audit scope was from October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017.

We interviewed Detention Center management and staff to gain an understanding of processes and controls. Testing criteria included standard operating practices and interlocal agreements with Bexar County.

As part of our testing procedures we examined the following areas:

- Staffing levels and schedules
- Staff training
- Custody and release of arrested persons
- Incident documentation
- Record retention
- Interlocal agreements
- User access controls

Processes at the Detention Center performed by Municipal Court, Bexar County, and University Health Care System (e.g. magistration, receipt of payment for fines and bonds, medical treatments provided, etc.) are not included within the scope of this audit.

We relied on computer-processed data in the SAP system to obtain employee lists, work schedules, and financial data. Our reliance was based on performing direct tests on the data rather than evaluating the system's general and application controls.

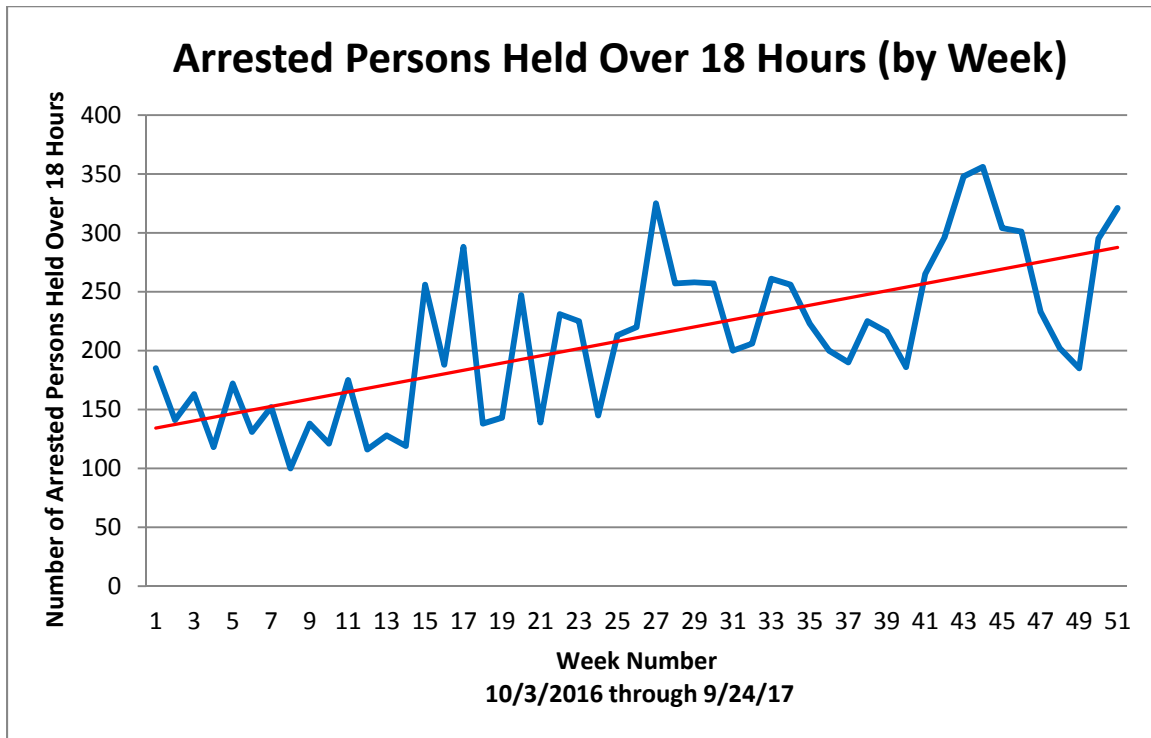
We also relied on computer-processed data in MAGS, a City mainframe system, to obtain a list of arrested persons and their length of stay at the Detention Center. Our reliance was primarily based on performing direct tests on the data rather than evaluating the system's general and application controls. We tested MAGS user access to determine if it is monitored and appropriately restricted. We do not believe that the absence of additional testing of general and application controls had an effect on the results of our audit.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

## Audit Results and Recommendations

### A. Custody in Excess of 18 Hours

Between October 3, 2016 and September 24, 2017, approximately 17% (11,000) of arrested persons were not processed through the Detention Center within the SAPD-set standard of 18 hours, averaging 20 hours. The number of arrested persons held over 18 hours ranged from 100 to over 350 per week and has increased over the year, as illustrated below.



Source: MAGS System

The 18 hour maximum holding time is an internal standard set by the Detention Center. When arrested persons are not efficiently moved out of the Detention Center, the cells become overcrowded. Additionally, the Detention Center is not equipped to meet the needs of arrested persons for extended stays - beds, bathing facilities, clothing, and other necessities of longer-term detention are not provided.

Arrested persons who obtain commercial or recognizance bonds can be released from the Detention Center. If completed while the arrested person is at the Detention Center, Bexar County avoids costs related to entering the arrested person into the County's jail. However, the amount of time required for both the bond processes and court activities is variable and can lead to release times that exceed the 18 hour maximum standard. Additionally, in fiscal year 2017, the

Detention Center documented 112 incidents occurring on 69 days in which Bexar County had capacity issues at their jail that resulted in the delayed transfer of arrested persons.

Exceeding the holding time of 18 hours increases health and safety risks at the Detention Center.

### **Recommendation**

The Police Chief should ensure that arrested persons are processed through the Detention Center within 18 hours. To facilitate this, coordinate with Bexar County to set cutoff times for completing the bonding process at the Detention Center.

## **B. Cell Checks**

The frequency of cell checks is not consistently meeting Detention Center standards.

Detention Center standards require that cell checks be made at least every 30 minutes. We took a random sample of 25 shifts and found that 44 out of 587 (about 7%) cell checks made during those shifts were not performed within 30 minutes of the prior checks.

Although supervisors frequently observe detention officers checking holding cells to ensure the safety of the arrested persons, no control is in place to ensure that they are performed within the required frequency.

The Detention Center's standard operating procedures state that any arrested person placed in a separate holding cell will be checked every 15-30 minutes. Additionally, the Detention Center staff has an unwritten policy to check holding cells every 15-20 minutes.

While the layout of the Detention Center is conducive to continuous unstructured monitoring and communication with arrested persons, periodic cell checks provide further assurance that arrested persons are secure and safe.

### **Recommendation**

The Police Chief should formalize standards for cell checks and implement controls to ensure that they occur within the required frequency.

### **C. Medical Evaluations and Use of Force**

Use of force (UOF) and intake practices related to medical evaluations do not match the Detention Center's standard operating procedures, and documentation is incomplete.

Detention Center officers and supervisors provide detailed written accounts related to any incidents that occur at the Detention Center, as well as written notes related to any illness or injury claimed by the arrested person during the intake process. However, use of force (UOF) and intake practices related to medical evaluations do not align with Detention Center standard operating procedures.

The Detention Center's standard operating procedures state that arrested persons must be observed by medical staff immediately after a use of force incident. Additionally, the standard operating procedures require that all complaints of being ill or injured must be evaluated by medical staff.

We reviewed a random sample of 25 incidents that occurred at the Detention Center, which included 14 UOF incidents. We noted that four of the 14 UOF incidents did not receive medical review, while six of the 14 UOF incidents received medical review but lacked documentation in the incident report. Additionally, a random sample of 35 intake forms included four in which the arrested person claimed illness or injury; however, only two received medical review.

We also noted that management review of UOF is not adequately documented. While the log recording incidents shows acknowledgement of review via highlighting of the incident number, no signature is recorded to identify the reviewer.

The risk of insufficient medical treatment increases when practices related to medical evaluations deviate from standard operating procedures. Also, weak documentation practices can result in inadequate oversight of arrested persons.

### **Recommendation**

The Police Chief should implement controls to ensure that medical evaluations are performed when required and are adequately documented by Detention Center and/or medical staff. Also, all UOF incidents should have clear documentation of management review.



## **D. Crisis Intervention and Use of Force Training**

SAPD Detention Center personnel are required to obtain use of force training; however, crisis intervention training is not mandatory. Additionally, the Detention Center's standard operating procedures do not have any training requirements for individuals, such as Municipal Court warrant officers, who have independent access (i.e. without the escort of a Detention Center officer) to arrested persons.

Crisis intervention training is designed to improve interactions with people who display symptoms of mental illness, while use of force training provides guidance on how to appropriately respond to violent and combative arrested persons.

Although crisis intervention training is not a requirement for SAPD's Detention Center employees, the lack of regular training in this area could result in avoidable incidents with arrested persons. Similarly, the lack of use of force training and crisis intervention training for warrant officers increases the safety risk to both staff and arrested persons.

### **Recommendation**

The Police Chief should expand Detention Center employee training requirements to include crisis intervention training. Additionally, periodic use of force training and crisis intervention training should be required for all individuals such as warrant officers who have independent access to arrested persons being held at the Detention Center.

## **E. Payments for Operations**

Bexar County has not paid the City its agreed-upon share of fiscal year 2017 Detention Center operating expenses totaling \$1.6 million. Monthly payments for fiscal year 2018 have also not been paid.

The City and County have a master interlocal agreement that was updated in 2016. The terms state that the County shall pay half of the total operating expenses on a monthly basis. Operating expenses include staffing, janitorial services, commodities, and other miscellaneous operating expenses.

The lack of reimbursement from Bexar County negatively impacts the City's cash flow.

### **Recommendation**

The Police Chief should continue to pursue reimbursement from Bexar County for amounts owed for Detention Center operating expenses up to the current month.

## **F. MAGS System Functionality**

The MAGS system, used to record and monitor activity at the Detention Center, lacks the functionality to produce pertinent management reports.

MAGS does not generate reports that would allow management to efficiently analyze operational data such as the average number of hours between arrival and release of arrested persons.

We also observed that MAGS is not accurately reflecting the number of arrested persons processed at the Detention Center. The data includes arrested persons who were seen by a judge at the Detention Center via video conferencing, but who were processed at alternative locations (i.e. Bexar County's jail or satellite office).

Additionally, some data entry errors are not corrected. Neither management nor staff edits fields such as "arrest date" and "arrival date" after they are saved because these fields cannot be modified unless the record is reentered.

In part, these issues occur because MAGS was not designed as a jail management system and has not been upgraded or replaced to better meet the needs of the Detention Center.

Without a means to easily make edits, MAGS data is prone to errors. Also, without the functionality to summarize data, Detention Center management cannot use MAGS to monitor and properly manage operations.

### **Recommendation**

The Police Chief should determine if the MAGS system can be modified or replaced to better meet the needs of the Detention Center.

## **G. User Access**

User access to two Detention Center systems (MAGS and OMNIXX) is excessive. Additionally, periodic user access reviews are not performed for these systems.

The Detention Center uses MAGS to record and monitor activity associated with processing arrested persons. MAGS had 127 users at the time of this audit. Of these 127 users, we observed seven former City employees and one current employee now working in a different City department whose access had not been

removed. Additionally, access for 16 users who previously worked at the Detention Center via Bexar County had not been removed.

The Detention Center uses OMNIXX, a Texas Department of Public Safety system, to access criminal justice information. The account used by the Detention Center had 44 users. However, 34 of the 44 users had not logged in since October 2016 and appear not to need access.

Administrative Directive 7.8d, Access Control, requires 1) user permissions to be based on the principle of least privilege, 2) access to be disabled upon separation, and 3) periodic reviews of user access.

Excessive user access and a lack of periodic reviews increases the risk of unauthorized users, inappropriate access and/or unauthorized modification of data.

### **Recommendation**

The Police Chief should ensure that user access is restricted to appropriate individuals by disabling or modifying user access upon changes in job functions and separations. Also, perform periodic user access reviews.

## **Appendix A – Staff Acknowledgement**

---

Mark Bigler, CPA-Utah, CISA, CFE, Audit Manager  
Rebecca Moulder, CIA, Auditor in Charge

## Appendix B – Management Response



### CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

P.O. Box 839966  
SAN ANTONIO TEXAS 78283-3966

April 30, 2018

Kevin W. Barthold, CPA, CIA, CISA  
City Auditor  
San Antonio, Texas

RE: Management's Corrective Action Plan for the Audit of SAPD Detention Center

SAPD has reviewed the audit report and has developed the Corrective Action Plans below corresponding to report recommendations.

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
1	<p><b>Custody in Excess of 18 Hours</b></p> <p>The Police Chief should ensure that arrested persons are processed through the Detention Center within 18 hours. To facilitate this, coordinate with Bexar County to set cutoff times for completing the bonding process at the Detention Center.</p>	4	Accept	Dep. Chief Robert Blanton	October 31, 2018
	<p><b>Action plan:</b> The county magistrates are not releasing the commitments until the person has been at the facility 17 hours. The city has had several meetings with Bexar County in an attempt to get this policy changed and the magistrates refuse to change the policy. Prisoners cannot be transported to the Bexar County Jail and transferred to the custody of the Sheriff until the commitment is released. Once CoSA resumes the magistrature function, the commitments will be released in a timely manner resulting in more efficient prisoner processing.</p>				

## Appendix B – Management Response (cont.)

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
2	<p><b>Cell Checks</b></p> <p>The Police Chief should formalize standards for cell checks and implement controls to ensure that they occur within the required frequency.</p>	4	Accept	Dep. Chief Robert Blanton	October 31, 2018
	<p><b>Action plan:</b> Detention management has implemented an alarm system to ensure cell checks are now being done in a timely manner. Supervisors are also making sure all cell checks are being documented properly. The Detention SOP will be amended to require that Supervisors perform periodic reviews of the cell check logs during the shift.</p>				
3	<p><b>Medical Evaluations and Use of Force</b></p> <p>The Police Chief should implement controls to ensure that medical evaluations are performed when required and are adequately documented by Detention Center and/or medical staff. Also, all UOF incidents should have clear documentation of management review.</p>	5	Accept	Dep. Chief Robert Blanton	October 31, 2018
	<p><b>Action plan:</b></p> <p>Detention management has changed the SOP to require medical observation after the physical use of force (UOF) level 4 (physical restraint and/or a takedown)</p> <p>Detention management has implemented a policy where detention officers document any claimed illness or injury on the intake form and document why the person was not seen by medical. The Detention SOP will be amended to identify when a medical evaluation is not required for prisoners with an illness not requiring immediate medical care.</p> <p>Detention management has changed the practice of reviewing UOF incidents. Management is now signing the UOF reports and initialing the log book after reviewing the UOF.</p>				

## Appendix B – Management Response (cont.)

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
4	<p><b>Crisis Intervention and Use of Force Training</b></p> <p>The Police Chief should expand Detention Center employee training requirements to include crisis intervention training. Additionally, periodic use of force training and crisis intervention training should be required for all individuals such as warrant officers who have independent access to arrested persons being held at the Detention Center.</p>	6	Accept	Dep. Chief Robert Blanton	October 31, 2018
<p><b>Action plan:</b> Detention Management has made Crisis Intervention, Use of Force, and Money Handling classes a priority. All new employees are now being required to take use of force training before being allowed to work the booking area. SAPD will liaison with Municipal Court management to facilitate training of personnel with independent access to persons held at the Detention Center.</p>					
5	<p><b>Payments for Operations</b></p> <p>The Police Chief should continue to pursue reimbursement from Bexar County for amounts owed for Detention Center operating expenses up to the current month.</p>	6	Accept	Dep. Chief Robert Blanton	October 31, 2018
<p><b>Action plan:</b></p> <p>CoSA Fiscal has received payment from Bexar County in the amount of \$1,524,235.07 for outstanding 2017 billing as determined by Bexar County. SAPD continues to bill Bexar County on a monthly basis for additional amounts owed by Bexar County.</p>					
6	<p><b>MAGS System Functionality</b></p> <p>The Police Chief should determine if the MAGS system can be modified or replaced to better meet the needs of the Detention Center.</p>	7	Accept	Dep. Chief Robert Blanton	October 31, 2018



## Appendix B – Management Response (cont.)

Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
	<b>Action plan:</b> Detention Management recommends examining potential systems being considered by Bexar County for Jail Management to determine whether the system could fit the needs of the Detention Center and Bexar County.				
7	<b>User Access</b>  The Police Chief should ensure that user access is restricted to appropriate individuals by disabling or modifying user access upon changes in job functions and separations. Also, perform periodic user access reviews.	8	Accept	Capt. Gary Smith	October 31, 2018
	<b>Action plan:</b> Detention Management has implemented a quarterly check to review users assigned to the Detention Center. The disabling and modifying will be done at this time.				

We are committed to addressing the recommendations in the audit report and the plan of actions presented above.

Sincerely,

  
 William McManus  
 Chief of Police  
 San Antonio Police Department

5-2-18  
 Date

  
 Erik Walsh  
 Deputy City Manager  
 City Manager's Office

5/7/18  
 Date