



**Office of Inspector General  
County of Los Angeles**

**Max Huntsman  
Inspector General**

**Evaluation of the Implementation of  
Fixed Cameras in the  
Los Angeles County Jails**

**OCTOBER 2017**

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## PURPOSE

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted an inspection of the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system at five Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD or the Department) Custody Services Division facilities: Century Regional Detention Facility (CRDF), Inmate Reception Center (IRC), Men's Central Jail (MCJ), North County Correctional Facility (NCCF), and Twin Towers Correctional Facility (TTCF).<sup>1</sup> This inspection assessed the functionality of each facility's CCTV system and compliance with applicable state law and departmental policies regarding CCTV and storage of video recordings.

## BACKGROUND

As observed by the Citizen's Commission on Jail Violence, "[c]ameras serve as a deterrent to the use of unnecessary and excessive force, enhance the reliability of the investigation of these incidents, and facilitate supervisors' ability to proactively spot check and identify personnel problems in need of correction."<sup>2</sup> The Department developed and continues to implement a five-year plan to install fixed CCTV cameras in custody facilities. The Department anticipates completion of this project by the end of 2018. The OIG conducted this inspection to assess the current status of the Department's CCTV camera system.

## SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This inspection encompassed three objectives in the areas of: 1) Real-Time Monitoring, 2) Continuous Recording, and 3) Record Retention. OIG staff reviewed the Custody Division Manual (CDM) section 7-06/010.00 and California Government sections 26202.6 and 26206.7 for this audit. The inspection included a review of the video feed from each CCTV camera installed at each facility to determine if the camera was providing real-time monitoring and continuously recording. The CCTV video recording history for selected cameras was also reviewed to determine if the Department is in compliance with applicable state records-retention law and departmental policy and procedures.

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<sup>1</sup> OIG did not conduct inspections at Pitchess Detention Center (PDC) North or PDC South because installation of the CCTV system was not completed at these facilities at the time of our inspections.

<sup>2</sup> "Report of the Citizens' Commission on Jail Violence," September 2012, *available at* <http://ccjv.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/CCJV-Report.pdf>

## TIME PERIOD

The following chart depicts the date(s) OIG staff conducted inspections at each facility and the period for which video history was reviewed.

Facility Name	Date(s) of Inspection	Time Period of Video History Review
CRDF	08/02/17	08/03/16 - 08/02/17
IRC	07/31/17, 09/21/17	08/01/16 - 07/31/17
MCJ	08/03/17, 08/30/17	08/31/16 - 08/30/17
NCCF	07/24/17, 08/01/17	08/02/16 - 08/01/17
TTCF	08/10/17	08/11/16 - 08/10/17

## POPULATION

The population of CCTV cameras for each facility was identified through the "DVTEL"<sup>3</sup> security camera software, which displays an inventory of installed cameras in a list referred to as a "tree." OIG staff reviewed the live video feed for each facility's DVTEL tree and identified the total number of cameras at each facility. We also reviewed a random sample<sup>4</sup> of cameras from each facility's video history using DVTEL. The following chart shows the total number of cameras for which live feed was reviewed and the number of sample cameras from which video histories were reviewed.

Facility Name	Population (total # of cameras)	Sample Size (# of cameras from which video history reviewed) <sup>5</sup>
CRDF	534	53
IRC	175	18
MCJ	937	94
NCCF	703	70
TTCF	833	83

<sup>3</sup> DVTEL is a trademarked name of a proprietary video management system marketed by Flir Systems, Inc.

<sup>4</sup> Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS) AU 350.04 allows for the use of a statistical sample when it provides sufficient evidence in order to form a reasonable basis for an opinion. (See also AU 350.45)

<sup>5</sup> The OIG utilized a systematic random sampling method, which consisted of listing all of the facility's cameras and randomly selecting every 10<sup>th</sup> of these cameras for review.

As the Department's Facilities Services Bureau continues to implement this project, the number of installed operational cameras may increase, or in some limited circumstances decrease, at any given facility.

## **DETAILED FINDINGS**

### *Objective No. 1 – Real-Time Monitoring*

#### **CRITERIA**

CDM section 7-06/010.00, Video Recording Procedures, Retention of Records, states that one of the objectives of the Department's fixed-surveillance system is to ". . . provide real time intelligence . . ."

#### **AUDIT PROCEDURES**

OIG staff reviewed DVTEL to determine if cameras were providing real-time monitoring at the time of our inspection. We reviewed the live feed from all (100%) cameras at each facility.

#### **FINDINGS**

##### *Century Regional Detention Facility*

Of the 534 cameras reviewed, 522 (97.8%) were providing real-time monitoring at the time of our inspection. Twelve (2.2%) cameras were not providing real-time monitoring: 6 of these displayed an image of insufficient definition to identify persons or objects, 4 of these displayed a completely obstructed view, and 2 of these displayed a partially obstructed view.

We spoke to CRDF's operations staff regarding the four cameras that displayed a completely obstructed view. We were told the view of two of the cameras was deliberately obstructed because they are located in offices solely occupied by deputies as office space and in an area into which prisoners are not allowed. The remaining two cameras were deliberately obstructed because they are in medical examination rooms where female prisoners at times disrobe for examinations. We confirmed with CRDF's captain that the captain approved of deliberately obstructing the views of these cameras.

##### *Inmate Reception Center*

Of the 175 cameras reviewed, 170 (97.1%) were providing real-time monitoring at the time of our inspection. Five (2.9%) cameras were not providing real-time monitoring because they were not operating.

##### *Men's Central Jail*

Of the 937 cameras reviewed, 863 (92.1%) were providing real-time monitoring at the time of our inspection. Seventy four (7.9%) cameras were not providing real-

time monitoring: 61 of these were not operating, 12 of these displayed an image of insufficient definition to identify persons or objects, and 1 was not angled properly to view the area it was intended to monitor.

***North County Correctional Facility***

Of the 703 cameras reviewed, 676 (96.2%) were providing real-time monitoring at the time of our inspection. Twenty seven (3.8%) cameras were not providing real-time monitoring: 26 of these were not operating and 1 of these displayed an image of insufficient definition to identify persons or objects.

***Twin Towers Correctional Facility***

Of the 833 cameras reviewed, 800 (96.0%) were providing real-time monitoring at the time of our inspection. Thirty-three (4.0%) cameras were not providing real-time monitoring: 30 of these were not operating, 2 of these displayed a dark screen caused by a problem with the video feed, 1 of these displayed an image of insufficient definition to identify persons or objects.

***Objective No. 2 – Continuous Recording***

**CRITERIA**

CDM section 7-06/010.00, Video Recording Procedures, Retention of Records, states that one of the objectives of the Department’s fixed surveillance cameras is to record and document events as they occur.

**AUDIT PROCEDURES**

OIG staff reviewed DVTEL to determine if the cameras were recording at the time of our inspection. This was determined by viewing the recording indicator on the DVTEL monitor. We reviewed the recording status of all (100.0%) cameras at each facility.

**FINDINGS**

***Century Regional Detention Facility***

All (100.0%) of the 534 cameras reviewed were recording at the time of our inspection.

***Inmate Reception Center***

Of the 175 cameras reviewed, 170 (97.1%) of the cameras were recording at the time of the inspection. Five (2.9%) cameras were not recording.

***Men’s Central Jail***

Of the 937 cameras reviewed, 907 (96.8%) of the cameras were recording at the time of the inspection. Thirty (3.2%) cameras were not recording.



***North County Correctional Facility***

Of the 703 cameras reviewed, 677 (96.3%) of the cameras were recording at the time of the inspection. Twenty six (3.7%) cameras were not recording.

***Twin Towers Correctional Facility***

Of the 833 cameras reviewed, 832 (99.9%) of the cameras were recording at the time of the inspection. One (.1%) camera was not recording.

**Objective No. 3 – Record Retention**

**CRITERIA**

California Government Code section 26202.6 requires that jail observation and monitoring system recordings be retained for one year.<sup>6</sup>

CDM, Section 7-06/010.00, Video Recording Procedures, states:

*"Fixed video surveillance cameras will record continuously and the contents shall be retained in electronic storage devices for a minimum of twelve (12) months, unless otherwise directed in writing by the respective Custody Services Division chief. "*

**AUDIT PROCEDURES**

OIG staff reviewed a random sample of each of the facility's video histories in DVTEL to determine if they retained video recordings for at least twelve months.

**FINDINGS**

***Century Regional Detention Facility***

Video recordings for all 53 (100.0%) cameras reviewed were retained for at least twelve months.

***Inmate Reception Center***

Video recordings for all 18 (100.0%) cameras reviewed were retained for at least twelve months.

***Men's Central Jail***

Video recordings for 91 (96.8%) of the 94 cameras reviewed were retained for at least twelve months. Video recordings for 3 (3.2%) cameras reviewed were not retained for at least twelve months.

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<sup>6</sup> Government Code 26206.7 allows, under some circumstances, for destruction after 90 days of video recordings, including routine video recordings of jail monitoring, if there is a written record of the events depicted in the video.

*North County Correctional Facility*

Video recordings for all 70 (100.0%) cameras reviewed were not retained for at least twelve months.

During our inspections at NCCF, operations staff stated that the facility's CCTV system is in the "installation phase" and has experienced disruptions in service. According to Data Systems Bureau (DSB), the installation phase is a period in which the Facility Services Bureau (FSB) and DSB work to bring of cameras online in phases. DSB staff stated that the NCCF cameras were migrated to a new storage system in January 2017. Although some cameras at NCCF were installed more than one year ago, DSB staff stated that video history prior to January 2017 was not retained. For the remaining cameras, DSB staff stated that NCCF's CCTV system was not fully functional (stable, online, recording, and allow for viewing) until July 2017. Therefore, there were disruptions in service to these cameras, including the ability to record, during the period of OIG's review.

*Twin Towers Correctional Facility*

Video recordings for all 83 (100.0%) cameras reviewed were retained for at least twelve months.

**ADDITIONAL FINDINGS**

During our inspections of IRC, MCJ, and TTCF, Operations staff stated that on July 24, 2017, a major power outage caused the centralized storage system shared by these facilities to shut down. This shutdown resulted in disruptions<sup>7</sup> in each of the facility's DVTEL systems for up to one week. In a report<sup>8</sup> issued in July 2017, we noted that NCCF experienced power outages on May 5, 2017 and June 20, 2017, resulting in weeks long failures of the facility's DVTEL system.

During our inspection at the IRC, we noted that the Records Office does not have any surveillance camera coverage to monitor areas where prisoner property and valuables (i.e., passports, identification cards, credit cards, currency, jewelry, etc.) are received and inventoried by staff. We also noted the Property Room did not have adequate surveillance camera coverage to monitor areas containing prisoner personal property and valuables. According to the IRC operations lieutenant, the Department is aware of this issue and is working to resolve the matter.

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<sup>7</sup> During these disruptions, several CCTV cameras at these facilities were not providing real-time monitoring or continuous recording.

<sup>8</sup> "Reform and Oversight Efforts: Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department," July 2017, available at [https://oig.lacounty.gov/Portals/OIG/Reports/Reform%20and%20Oversights%20Efforts%20\\_July%202017.pdf?ver=2017-08-09-144106-333](https://oig.lacounty.gov/Portals/OIG/Reports/Reform%20and%20Oversights%20Efforts%20_July%202017.pdf?ver=2017-08-09-144106-333)



## CONCLUSION

Overall, we noted that a majority of the CCTV cameras were functional (i.e., providing real-time monitoring, as well as displaying and recording acceptable quality video footage) at the time of our inspection at each facility. However, video history for cameras we reviewed at NCCF was not retained for at least one year as required by law due to storage issues. DSB staff reported that NCCF's storage matter was resolved in January 2017 when the facility's cameras were migrated to a new storage system.

Additionally, we noted that following a power outage, jail facilities continue to experience disruptions in the service of their CCTV systems for extended periods of time.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Custody Division Manual Section 7-06/010.00 allows for destruction of video recordings prior to twelve months if "directed in writing by the respective Custody Services Division chief." The Department should ensure that California Government Code section 26202.6, requiring jail observation and monitoring system recordings be retained for a minimum of one year unless there are duplicate records as defined in Government Code section 26206.7, be followed and revise the Custody Division Manual to conform to the current law. (Objective 3)
2. CRDF's Captain approved of intentionally obstructing the views of four cameras at CRDF. The Department should determine if these cameras are no longer necessary and take appropriate action, such as removing or disabling the cameras. (Objective 1)
3. Following a power outage, jail facilities continue to experience disruptions in the service of their CCTV systems for extended periods of time. The Department should ensure that DSB determines how to minimize the length of time that any facility's DVTEL system fails following a power outage. (Additional Findings)
4. IRC's Records Office and Property Room do not have adequate surveillance camera coverage to monitor areas containing prisoner personal property and valuables. The Department should ensure that the IRC continues to work toward installing additional cameras to adequately monitor the areas containing prisoner personal property and valuables. (Additional Findings)



# OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

HALL OF JUSTICE

JIM McDONNELL, SHERIFF



October 27, 2017

Max Huntsman, Inspector General  
Los Angeles County Office of Inspector General  
312 South Hill Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, California 90013

Dear Mr. Huntsman:

**RESPONSE TO THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY OFFICE OF INSPECTOR  
GENERAL REPORT – EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FIXED  
CAMERAS IN THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY JAILS**

Attached is the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's (Department) response to the Los Angeles County Office of Inspector General's (OIG) final report entitled, "Evaluation of the Implementation of Fixed Cameras in the Los Angeles County Jails."

As I believe you are aware, prior to the release of the above-entitled report, I directed our internal Audit and Accountability Bureau (AAB) to conduct Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Audits for two of our custody facilities. Both audits were conducted under the guidance of Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards. The results of the first audit were presented to me on April 6, 2016. The results of the second audit were presented to me on October 3, 2017. Both audits identified deficiencies governing the functionality of the facility's CCTV system and compliance with Departmental policies regarding CCTV and storage of video recordings. The Department is currently in the process of rectifying the deficiencies identified by AAB.

In addition, AAB recommended that issues with the CCTV system be addressed and solved with Data Systems Bureau and Custody Services Division. Consequently, the Technology and Support Division, as the governing body for the Department's CCTV systems, will be included as part of any corrective action, as well as Custody Operations. The published audits, as well as all of the underlying documentation, recommendations,

211 WEST TEMPLE STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012

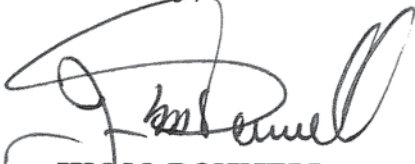
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and processes, are available for review on the Department's public website, [www.lasd.org](http://www.lasd.org), under the Public Data Sharing section.

I thank you and your staff for your efforts in reviewing and assessing the current status of the Department's CCTV camera system. Our responses to your specific recommendations are addressed in the attached document.

The Audit and Accountability Bureau has the responsibility to monitor and document the Department's response related to this evaluation. Should you have any questions regarding the Department's response, please contact Captain Steven E. Gross at (323) 307-8302.

Sincerely,



JIM McDONNELL  
SHERIFF



RESPONSE TO THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – SHERIFF

SUBJECT: EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FIXED CAMERAS IN THE  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY JAILS

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE OIG

1. Custody Division Manual, Section 7-06/010.00 allows for destruction of video recording prior to 12 months if “directed in writing by the respective Custody Services Division Chief.” The Department should ensure that California Government Code Section 26202.6, requiring jail observation and monitoring system recordings be retained for a minimum of one year unless there are duplicate records as defined in Government Code Section 26206.7, be followed and revise the Custody Division Manual to conform to the current law.

Response: Concur. The policy will be reviewed, and if there is no lawful reason for the video recordings to be destroyed prior to 12 months, the policy will be revised to ensure it complies with current law.

2. Century Regional Detention Facility’s (CRDF) Captain approved of intentionally obstructing the views of four cameras at CRDF. The Department should determine if these cameras are no longer necessary and take appropriate action, such as removing or disabling the cameras.

Response: Concur. The Department will review the use of the four cameras in question and evaluate whether they should be removed or repositioned.

3. Following a power outage, jail facilities continue to experience disruptions in the service of their Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) systems for extended periods of time. The Department should ensure that Data Systems Bureau (DSB) determines how to minimize the length of time that any facility’s DVTEL system fails following a power outage.

Response: Concur. The Department will endeavor to ensure that DSB works on determining how to minimize the length of time that any facility’s DVTEL system fails following a power outage. The primary issue has been with the aging equipment that is beyond service life. However, DSB is working on a replacement plan to address camera quality as well as the infrastructure behind supporting the jail CCTV systems.

4. Inmate Reception Center's (IRC) Records Office and Property Room do not have adequate surveillance camera coverage to monitor areas containing prisoner personal property and valuables. The Department should ensure that the IRC continues to work toward installing additional cameras to adequately monitor the areas containing prisoner personal property and valuables.

Response: Concur. The Inmate Reception Center has been working toward installing additional cameras to adequately monitor the areas containing prisoner personal property and valuables. A request for additional surveillance cameras was submitted and approved earlier this year by the Custody Services Division Chief. The Department is currently identifying a source for funding. The additional cameras at the IRC will be installed once personnel tasked with installing cameras complete their installation of cameras at our North County Correctional facilities.