

Ventura County Juvenile Hall

REASON FOR INVESTIGATION

The 1995/96 Ventura County Grand Jury received a citizen's complaint # 95-13 regarding the inadequate outdoor recreational space at the Clifton Tatum Center, juvenile facility.

BACKGROUND

Clifton Tatum Center (Juvenile Hall) is a short term detention facility for minors who are awaiting adjudication and/or placement. The population consists of 100 - 120 minors ranging from twelve to eighteen years of age with an average detainment period of two weeks.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

- Visited Clifton Tatum Center.
- Interviewed staff at Clifton Tatum Center.
- Reviewed Title 15, of the California Penal Code which deals with Minimum Standards for Juvenile Halls in the State of California.

FINDINGS

- The State of California establishes minimum standards for the operation of juvenile halls. Section 4286 of the California Code of Regulations states that there must be a minimum of three hours a day during the week and five hours a day each Saturday and Sunday of scheduled recreation and exercise. This schedule shall include the opportunity of at least one hour of outdoor physical activity per day weather permitting.
- Section 4313 of this same California Code complicates the Center's ability to carry out the previous section's provisions by requiring that those accused of violent crimes be separated from less serious offenders in sleeping, dining, toilet and showers, and recreation for reasons of safety.
- Rival gang members pose a security risk to themselves and other inmates and must be separated during many activities.
- When inmates must be separated, it is difficult or impossible to schedule outside recreation time due to the inadequate space and the increased number of juvenile offenders.
- The staff at Clifton Tatum Center and County officials are aware of their inability to provide adequate recreational time and space and the fact that they are not in compliance with Title 15.
- The Clifton Tatum Center was built in 1941 before Title 15 was enacted.
- County agencies are engaged in plans to build a new Juvenile Assessment Center.

RECOMMENDATION

The 1995/96 Ventura County Grand Jury recommends:

The problem of inadequate outdoor recreational space be rectified as soon as possible in order to meet the minimum standards required by the California Code of Regulations.

If this non compliance item cannot be resolved in the present facility then we fully support plans for the new Juvenile Assessment Center and recommend that County Supervisors and other officials look at this project as a priority.

RESPONSE REQUIRED

Board of Supervisors

Public Social Services Agency