

**CITIZENS' LAW ENFORCEMENT REVIEW BOARD  
POLICY RECOMMENDATION**

**SEARCH OR SCAN ALL PERSONS ENTERING  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY DETENTION FACILITIES, TO INCLUDE EMPLOYEES**

**BACKGROUND:**

From 2006 through 2020, 185 people died in San Diego County's jails. The rate of deaths in San Diego County's jails raised concerns about underlying systemic issues within the San Diego Sheriff's Department's (SDSD) policies, procedures, and practices.

The California State Auditor (CSA) conducted an audit of the SDSD to determine the reasons for in-custody deaths; concluded that the SDSD failed to adequately prevent and respond to deaths of individuals in its custody; and made several recommendations pertaining to intake screenings, medical and mental health care, safety checks, and responses to medical emergencies.

A CLERB-commissioned study by Analytica Consulting in which overdose/accidental death rates of San Diego County Adult Detention Facilities inmates were compared to those from 11 other California counties revealed that San Diego County inmates have the highest overdose/accidental death rates. An inmate in San Diego is two times more likely to die in this manner than what is expected based on county mortality rates. San Diego County was the only county with a statistically significant excess number of overdose/accidental deaths. A review of drug-related causes of death for inmates over the past two years indicated that fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, contributed to most of those deaths.

It is undisputed that illicit and prescription drugs are being smuggled into the SDSD-operated detention facilities, presumably via several different means. There is no doubt that illicit substances are being introduced to the incarcerated person (I/P) population by the I/Ps themselves. It is also likely that visitors, to include persons visiting I/Ps for social or professional purposes, are smuggling substances into the facilities. What cannot be dismissed and must be seriously considered is the possibility that SDSD employees, contractors, and those persons conducting county-related business are also bringing illicit substances into the facilities.

It is probable that the physical searching or body scanning of all persons entering a detention facility for any reason, to include all SDSD employees, contractors, and those persons conducting county-related business, will result in fewer illicit and prescription drugs being introduced into the I/P population, thus reducing the use of said substances and, therefore, reducing the likelihood of overdoses and deaths.

CLERB believes that all efforts to reduce the likelihood of in-custody deaths must be taken, to include those that would appear fiscally cost prohibitive or delay facility operations. CLERB believes the value of human life outweighs any cost and is greater than any resulting operational delays.

On 04-19-22, CLERB recommended that SDSD require the completion of body scans of all I/Ps transferred between facilities. SDSD did not implement the recommendation and cited operational delays as the reason for non-implementation. If the below policy recommendation is implemented, it would result in all persons being searched or scanned upon entering a detention facility, which would not only include all visitors, employees, contractors, persons conducting county-related business, and I/Ps upon booking, but all I/Ps transferring between facilities or re-entering a facility after having departed it for court, medical treatment, etc.

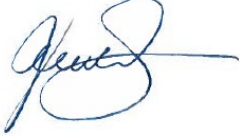

**POLICY RECOMMENDATION:**

Pursuant to Section 340.9(g) of the San Diego County Administrative Code, the Citizens' Law Enforcement Review Board (CLERB) shall have the authority to review and make recommendations on policies and procedures of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and San Diego County Probation Department. As such, CLERB makes the following policy recommendation to the SDSD:

1. Physically search or body scan all persons entering a SDSD-operated detention facility, to include all SDSD

employees, County employees, contractors, and those persons conducting county-related business.

- a. "All persons" also includes social and professional visitors and incarcerated persons (I/Ps) upon booking and transferring between facilities or re-entering a facility after having departed it for court, medical treatment, etc.

Submitted by: 	Date:  08-19-22	Reviewed by: 	Date:  08-19-22
Paul R. Parker III, Executive Officer		Lynn Setzler, Supervising Special Investigator	