

**Mono County Civil Grand Jur
Annual Inspection of the Mono County Jail Bridgeport,
California
2025 - 2026**

Authority

Pursuant to California Penal Code Section 919(b), the Mono County Civil Grand Jury (MCGJ) is mandated to annually inquire into the condition and management of public detention facilities within the county.

Methodology

On March 5, 2026, three members of the 2025-2026 Mono County Grand Jury conducted an on-site inspection of the Mono County Jail, located in Bridgeport, California.

Facility Overview

- **Original Construction:** 1964
- **Renovation:** 1988
- **Facility Type:** Type II
- **Inmate Capacity:** 48 beds

A replacement facility is planned at a different location in Bridgeport and it was reported that the project is on schedule and budget. The project is being managed by the Department of Public Works with input from the detention facility staff.

Observations and Findings

Facility Condition

- The current jail is outdated and deteriorating.
- The jail has been painted and cleaned extensively, with a focus on maintaining the best working and living conditions.
- The Sheriff's team is working closely with the Department of Public Works to replace failing hardware by redistributing and "jerry-rigging" fixtures to maintain functionality.

Staffing

- Staffing levels are below standard and insufficient for optimal operation. There are 5 open positions with two in the hiring process.
- Current staffing includes 3 sergeants, allowing only partial on-site leadership coverage.
- Recruitment challenges stem from the region's harsh winters, a lack of affordable housing, and the need for recruits to have the skills of both jailers and dispatch.

Inmate Management

- Inmate population has been managed conservatively to alleviate staffing constraints.

Emergency Preparedness

- Fire safety protocols appear to be followed, including annual fire drills and proper maintenance of fire extinguishers.

Recreation and Education

- A modest library and board games are available to inmates. Handheld devices have been added to allow communication and the ability to purchase movies/entertainment.

Procedures and Training

- Documentation outlining jailer responsibilities, processes and procedures were well documented and comprehensive. Lieutenant Hernandez has focused on training and his staff's understanding.

Medical support

- Efforts are made to set up appointments and transport inmates to the local clinic when needed.
- Sick inmates are isolated when an isolation cell is available; however if not available they are left in the general population with other individuals.

Tour Summary

Upon arrival, Grand Jury members presented valid identification and secured all personal belongings in designated lockers. No purses or electronic devices were permitted during the tour.

The group was welcomed by Lieutenant Hernandez, and the visit began with an informational meeting in the employee community room. Ample opportunity was provided for questions and discussion regarding facility operations and ongoing challenges.

A new Health and Safety Code requirement, effective January 1, 2027, will mandate that dispatch centers provide pre-arrival medical/emergency medical instructions (e.g., bleeding control, CPR guidance). This service is not currently provided and is not permitted under existing policy, though the upcoming requirement has been acknowledged.

The department is actively engaged in a grant-funded initiative to enhance re-entry programs, which includes implementation of a new electronic health record system currently in progress. Staff report having adequate support to meet grant requirements.

Subsequent to the introductory meeting with Lieutenant Hernandez, the group conducted a tour of the dispatch and jailer control room. Staff engaged openly and provided transparency into various aspects of their complex responsibilities. A total of three staff members (excluding the Lieutenant) were present; however, Lieutenant Hernandez indicated that operations function most effectively with four staff on duty.

Lieutenant Hernandez was the supervisor on duty; however, in the event of a lapse in on-site supervision, staff would need to rely on contacting a supervisor at home. As noted above, leadership presence is only partial, which may present a potential liability.

The tour included the kitchen, which was observed to be clean, well-organized, and compliant with safety standards. The refrigerator and freezer areas were also orderly and sanitary. The cook reported the need to repair or replace the oven hood. It was noted that the cook took pride in the work he does, in both taking care of inmates dietary needs and the kitchen facilities as a whole.

All facilities seem to be very clean and freshly painted. There was a notable aesthetic improvement relative to prior visits, reflecting staff pride in maintaining the facility

Overall, it is evident that staff are doing their utmost to maintain safety and operational efficiency under difficult conditions in an aging facility.

Recommendations

1. Continue to monitor construction of the new jail facility to prevent future maintenance and facility issues.
2. Continue hardware repairs where feasible, ensuring security is not compromised.
3. Consider adding a sergeant position to facilitate round the clock on-site supervision and support.
4. Obtain Board approval to implement 24/7 on-site supervisory coverage, with staffing levels designed to maintain supervisor coverage during sick leave and holiday absences.
5. Continue efforts to identify and implement solutions to support staff recruitment and retention.
6. Prioritize planning and implementation of pre-arrival medical instruction (emergency medical dispatch) capabilities to ensure compliance, including protocol development, staff training, and resource allocation.

The team reviewed the BSCC State reports for 2023, 2024 and 2025.

New Jail Construction Update

Conclusion

Overall, the Mono County Jail facility in Bridgeport is operating under increasingly difficult conditions due to outdated infrastructure, persistent maintenance issues, and staffing limitations. While staff demonstrated professionalism, transparency, and a clear commitment to maintaining safety and operational efficiency, these efforts are occurring within significant structural and resource constraints. The facility itself was observed to be clean and well-maintained, reflecting staff pride and diligence despite the challenges associated with an aging environment.

In addition to the above recommendations, the Grand Jury emphasizes that a replacement facility is critical to ensuring the long-term safety and security of both inmates and personnel. The new Jail facility is now under construction. In the meantime, Mono County should continue to address staffing limitations, including supervisory coverage, overall staffing levels, and training to support emergency medical dispatch requirements. Without progress in these areas, the ability to maintain safe, compliant, and sustainable operations will remain at risk

