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USE OF SAFETY CELL

I. POLICY

- A. The use of the Safety Cell will be carefully controlled and monitored in order to prevent the indiscriminate and arbitrary placement of inmates. In no case shall the Safety Cell be used for punishment or as a substitute for treatment.
- B. The Safety Cell will be utilized to confine an inmate who is either uncontrollably violent or self-destructive, and only for the period of time absolutely necessary. Only one inmate will be placed in the Safety Cell at a time.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. SAFETY CELL

- 1. Located at Intake/Reception, this padded cell is specially designed and equipped for an inmate who is classified as suicidal, extremely destructive, violent, or shows violent psychiatric disorders.

B. GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR USING THE SAFETY CELL

- 1. Behavior symptomatic of acute or critical psychiatric/mental health illness.
- 2. Suicide prevention measures.
- 3. Threat to cause physical harm to others.
- 4. Immediate danger to safety of inmate from self-inflicted harm. Self-inflicted harm includes suicide attempts or behavior likely to lead to fractures of the head, face, and extremities.

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5. Behavior that results in the destruction of windows, doors, and other fixtures.

C. STEP DOWN PROCESS

1. The Step Down process is the method used by the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office to remove people from the Safety Cell that have been housed in a Safety Cell for three days, or more, and are stable to the point that they no longer need the physical structure of the Safety Cell. However, not stable enough for housing in general population

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. The Facility Supervisor will be notified immediately for approval prior to placement of an inmate into the Safety Cell.
 1. The only exception to prior approval is in the most volatile of circumstances. In these instances, staff may place the inmate in a safety cell while obtaining approval in order to keep the inmate or others from being injured.
 2. In the event the placement is disapproved, the Facility Supervisor will cause the immediate placement of the inmate to the appropriate housing.
- D. The complete removal of clothing must be individualized and based on clear justification that retention of the clothing represents a risk to the safety of the individual. While some inmates may use their clothing to harm themselves, it is not acceptable to routinely deprive inmates in safety cells of all clothing.
 1. If the circumstances warrant it, prior to the placement of an inmate into the Safety Cell, the inmate may be stripped of all clothing articles and other property.
 - a. In the cases of use of force, it is authorized to cut the clothing off with the medical style scissors found in booking. This is primarily done to avoid extending the use of force while waiting for a Safety Smock. The Safety Smock can be issued at a later time.
 - b. When possible, only staff the same sex of the inmate shall be involved in the removal of the clothes.

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- c. When an inmate is stripped of clothing, the inmate shall be dressed in the Safety Smock.
 - d. A safety blanket may also be issued.
 - e. If the inmate refuses to wear the smock, or tries to destroy it, the smock may be removed until the inmate desires to wear it or it is determined that the inmate is capable of not damaging the smock. If an inmate initially refuses to wear the smock, it shall not constitute reason to later deny the garment to the inmate when the inmate desires to wear the garment.
2. Shoes, pens, or other articles are PROHIBITED in the Safety Cell.
 3. Eating utensils, to include plastic spoons, which could be used to inflict either personal injury, injury to staff, or damage any part of the cell, shall not be issued.
 4. Razors are PROHIBITED in the cells.
- C. Staff shall notify medical personnel of the placement and request an on-view evaluation.
1. A medical opinion on placement and retention will be secured within one (1) hour of placement in a Safety Cell and the inmate will be medically cleared for continued retention every twenty-four (24) hours thereafter.
- E. The retention of an inmate in the Safety Cell will be reviewed a minimum of every eight hours by the Facility Supervisor and documented on the observation log.
1. A follow up medical assessment shall be completed within a maximum of eight (8) hours of placement in the Safety Cell and documented on the observation log.
 2. If within the first six hours of placement in the Safety Cell the inmate has shown no improvement, continuing deterioration of behavior through escalated inappropriate actions, inability to take on fluids and medical staff has been unable to perform hands on assessment; the inmate will be transported to the hospital for further medical and diagnostic evaluations.

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3. A mental health opinion on placement and retention shall be secured within twenty-four (24) hours of placement and documented on the observation log.
 4. In addition, if it is necessary to retain an inmate in a Safety Cell for more than 3 days and the Step Down process is not an option; arrangements will be made by medical staff to have the Mental Health Department evaluate the person for 5150 WIC and housing in a Title 22 facility.
- F. Intermittent direct visual supervision will be provided at least twice every thirty minutes. Checks shall be noted on the observation log. Annotation such as 1000, 1015, 1030, 1045, etc. shall not be allowed on these logs.
1. Audio and/or video monitoring will also be provided through Control Room in each building.
- G. Physical checks are to be performed no less than hourly on inmates housed in the Safety Cell.
1. When conducting a physical check, Corrections staff will enter the safety cell and check to make sure the inmate is breathing, is controlling bodily functions, can answer basic questions, is eating, and is taking fluids.
 2. Physical checks will be documented on the Safety Cell Monitoring Log.
 3. Exception: If an inmate poses an immediate physical threat to staff, a physical check will not be required. A notation will be made Safety Cell Monitoring Log documenting why a physical check could not be completed.
- H. The Corrections Deputy placing the inmate into the Safety Cell will initiate an Incident Report. The Incident Report will include:
1. Circumstances surrounding the Safety Cell placement;
 2. Notification of the Facility Supervisor and approval;
 3. Time of placement;
 4. Notification, actions, and/or observations of the medical and/or mental health staff;

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5. Other staff directly involved in the placement and/or observation of the inmate in the Safety Cell;
6. Any use of force or restraint devices; and
7. Justification if clothing was removed and the issuing the safety garment.

I. The "Observation Log" will become a permanent part of the inmate's Classification file after the inmate is removed from the Safety Cell.

J. NUTRITION AND FLUIDS

1. Inmates placed in the Safety Cell shall be provided with food during normal daily meal servings.
2. Inmates in Safety Cells can become dehydrated. To prevent this, they shall be offered at least two cups of water per hour and shall be allowed more water if the need is evident. Medical staff shall be notified if an inordinate amount of water seems to be needed by the inmate.
3. Intake of food and water shall be annotated on the "Observation Log."

K. Removal from the Safety Cell

1. Removal of a person that displayed violent behavior or behavior resulting in significant destruction of jail property not related to a mental illness can be removed by the facility supervisor.
2. Removal of a person that displayed behavior symptomatic of acute psychiatric problems or is an immediate or potential suicide risk will be evaluated by mental health staff prior to removal.
3. If the person was arrested for a heinous crime and investigators want to interview that person, the facility supervisor will immediately contact the medical staff psychiatrist, or designee, to perform a removal evaluation for the purposes of the interview. If cleared the person shall be removed for the interview.

V. STEP DOWN PROCESS

- A. The Step Down process is method use at the Mendocino County Jail to remove people from the Safety Cell that have been housed in a Safety Cell for three days,

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or more, and are stable to the point that they no longer need the physical structure of the Safety Cell. However, not stable enough for housing in general population.

- B. There will be a Step Down Committee made up of the Medical Manager, Mental Health Nurse, Corrections Captain or Lieutenant, Classification Sergeant or Deputy, and the on-duty facility sergeant.
- C. It is the Committee's responsibility to make the decision when to utilize the step down process. The committee will collaborate on how and where the Step Down process will be implemented.
- D. When an inmate is in the Step Down process, direct visual supervision will be performed by Correctional Staff once every half-hour. This will be documented on the Observation Log. Mental Health staff will review every twenty-four hours.
- E. A tracking form will be used to document what articles and activities the person can have or perform.
- L. Review Policy and Procedure 505.00 – Use of Force and Restraints.
- M. Review [Policy and Procedure 501.00 – Inmate Classification](#).
- N. Review California Code of Regulations, Title 15, Sections 1052 and 1055.

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