

Index as:  
Grievance, Inmate  
Inmate Grievance Procedure

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INMATE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

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I. I POLICY

- A. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, Corrections Division, conforms to uniform guidelines for the handling of inmate grievances per Title 15.
- B. Inmates may submit their complaints regarding conditions of their confinement, including, but not limited to: medical care; program participation; telephone, mail, and visiting procedures; or food, clothing and bedding using this grievance process. The exceptions to this policy are decisions handed down by the Courts, and inmate disciplinary actions. There are specific appeal procedures for these actions.

II. PROCEDURES

- A. Every effort will be made to resolve grievances at the lowest level. The following serves as the administrative remedies for inmates in the inmate grievance process.
  - 1. Corrections Deputy
    - a. The grievance will be discussed with the inmate to assess the problem and possible resolutions.
    - b. If the problem can be resolved at this level, there is no need to file a grievance.
    - c. If an answer to the grievance cannot be provided, the Corrections Deputy will provide the inmate with a grievance form. The inmate has 5 days from the time of the incident to file the grievance form.

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- (1) The 5-day limit is set so that the matter can be investigated and accurately addressed by staff in a timely manner.
  - d. Upon receipt of an inmate grievance form, the receiving staff member shall review it for completeness, inmate signature and profanity.
  - e. The Corrections Deputy will sign and date the form, then record the grievance on the Grievance Log and forward it to the On Duty Sergeant for review and forwarding to the designated Sergeant.
  - f. When a grievance is of an emergency nature, the Corrections Deputy receiving the grievance shall immediately refer the matter to the on-duty Facility Supervisor.
  - g. Only one issue can be addressed per grievance form. The inmate must restrict their statement to the form. No additional statements on additional paper will be allowed.
2. LEVEL I - Corrections Sergeant
  - a. The designated Corrections Sergeant will review, investigate, and speak with the inmate.
  - b. The Corrections Sergeant will document the findings in the Level I section within 5 working days of receipt. Two copies will be made with the original copy being returned to the inmate. A copy will be placed in the A-File and one in the Grievance File.
  - c. If the inmate is dissatisfied with the Level I resolution, the grievance may be appealed to the next level.
3. LEVEL II - Corrections Lieutenant
  - a. The Corrections Lieutenant will review and verify the inmate's grievance and Sergeant's resolution. If needed, investigate further.
  - b. The Corrections Lieutenant will document the findings in the Level II section within 7 working days of receipt. Two copies will be made with the original copy being returned to the inmate. A copy will be placed in the A-File and one in the Grievance File.

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- c. If the inmate is dissatisfied with the Level II resolution, the grievance may be appealed to the next level.
- 4. LEVEL III - Corrections Division Commander
  - a. The Corrections Division Commander will review and verify the inmate's grievance and Lieutenant's resolution. If needed, investigate further.
  - b. The Corrections Division Commander will document the findings in the Level III section within 7 working days of receipt. Two copies will be made with the original copy being returned to the inmate. A copy will be placed in the A-File and one in the Grievance File.
  - c. The review by the Corrections Division Commander is the final administrative remedy available to the inmates in the inmate grievance process.

III. MEDICAL GRIEVANCES

- A. On all medical grievances, each level will consult with medical contractor.

IV. CLASSIFICATION GRIEVANCES

- A. Level one grievances involving inmate classification be forwarded to the Classification Sergeant.

V. RECORD KEEPING

- A. The designated Corrections Sergeant will maintain the grievance file and document statistical information.

VI. CITIZEN COMPLAINTS BY INMATES

- A. Inmates wishing to file a complaint under Penal Code Section 832.5, about staff conduct, must first start by utilizing the grievance process. The Corrections Sergeant and Lieutenant will brief the Corrections Division Commander on the complaint. The Corrections Division Commander will make a determination if the complaint rises to the level of an internal affairs investigation. If the complaint does rise to that level, it will be assigned to one of the corrections lieutenants. If it does not, it will be processed as a grievance.

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VII. MISUSE OF THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

- A. Inmates who file excessive, unfounded, or frivolous grievances may have their right to file further grievances limited to two grievances a month. The Corrections Division Commander will evaluate and determine if an inmate is abusing the grievance system. If the inmate is abusing the grievance system, they will be notified in writing that their right to file grievances will be limited.
  - 1. The abusing inmate may still file one grievance a week on issues involving health and safety issues.
- B. Grievances containing profanity, obscene language or inflammatory insulting statements, which are not necessary to describe an activity being grieved, shall be logged and rejected by the designated Sergeant. In addition, grievances that cannot be understood or are obscured by pointless verbiage and/or voluminous unrelated documentation shall be rejected.
- C. Grievances involving the decision on a previous grievance, regarding the same matter, once all levels of administrative remedies are exhausted shall be logged and rejected by the designated Sergeant.
- D. Grievances clearly written by the restricted inmate under another inmate's name will be logged and rejected, after being reviewed by the Sergeant and the listed inmate.

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