

# **CORRECTIONAL DEPUTIES OVERTIME**

## **Summary**

The 2003-2004 grand jury conducted an investigation and issued a report concerning allegations that correctional officers (reclassified as correctional deputies in December 2006 and referred to as such in the remainder of this report) were required to perform an excessive number of mandatory overtime hours. The 2004 grand jury report made several recommendations regarding the number of overtime hours required.

Having received two complaints alleging that the number of overtime hours remained excessive, the current grand jury made a decision to revisit this issue to determine the current mandatory overtime requirements and assess what improvements, if any, had been made since the 2004 grand jury report.

The 2006-2007 grand jury found that staffing levels in the Detention Division have declined slightly, the number of industrial injuries reduced, and the amount of mandatory overtime hours steadily declined.

## **Reason for Investigation**

The 2006-2007 grand jury received two complaints in 2006 alleging that the level of mandatory overtime remained high resulting in morale issues, an increase in turnover rates and industrial injuries and excessive use of sick time.

## **Background**

The 2004 grand jury report found that staffing levels needed to be increased to reduce the number of mandatory overtime hours. The County Administrator's response to the grand jury report included comments that one factor in reducing overtime was a focus on reducing workplace accidents. The current grand jury found that efforts by the Sheriff's Department and the Risk Management Division of the County Human Resources Department were very effective in reducing the number of industrial injuries and were a significant factor in reducing mandatory overtime.

## **Investigative Procedures**

During the course of this investigation, the grand jury interviewed the following County personnel:

1. Sheriff, Sonoma County
2. Assistant Sheriff, Detention Division, Sheriff's Department
3. President, Sonoma County Law Enforcement Association
4. Administrative Lieutenant, Detention Division, Sheriff's Department
5. Lieutenant, Personnel Bureau, Sheriff's Department
6. Sergeant, Personnel Bureau, Sheriff's Department
7. Risk Manager, Risk Management Division, Human Resources Department
8. Risk Control Manager, Risk Management Division, Human Resources Department

9. Risk Analyst II, Risk Management Division, Human Resources Department.

The grand jury reviewed the following documents in conjunction with its investigation

1. Summary of the number of correctional deputies hired and those leaving the Corrections Division, 2001 through 2005
2. Summary of correctional deputies unavailable for duty for the years 2004 through 2006
3. Summary of overtime hours mandated for 2004 through 2006
4. Summary of the number of correctional deputy's industrial injury/indemnity claims from 2001 through 2006
5. Cal-OSHA 300A logs for 2004 through 2006
6. Report to Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, "Analysis of County of Sonoma's Worker's Compensation Program through June 30, 2005"
7. County of Sonoma Accident/Incident report form
8. Human Resources Job Descriptions for CO 1, CO II and Corrections Sergeant.

## Terminology

**MADF.** Main Adult Detention Facility, 2777 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa (next to the Hall of Justice)

**NCDF.** North County Detention Facility, 2254 Ordinance Road, Santa Rosa (next to the Charles M. Schultz airport)

**CO.** Correctional Officers (reclassified as Correctional Deputies in December, 2006)

**Cal-OSHA.** California Division of the Occupational Safety & Health Administration

## Findings

F1. During its investigation, the grand jury determined that there were two significant aspects affecting the issue of mandatory overtime: (1) the issue of recruitment and retention of correctional deputies, and (2) the Detention Division's Safety and Loss Prevention efforts.

F2. As with many law enforcement recruitment efforts, the recruitment of qualified applicants remains a daunting task. Recent newspaper articles state that the County of Mendocino is short approximately 30% of its authorized patrol staff, and that the California Department of Corrections is close to 4000 officers short of being fully staffed in state prisons.

F3. From 2001 through 2006, the Sheriff's Department Detention Division hired 129 correctional deputies and lost 137 correctional deputies. There were several reasons for the decline in the number of correctional deputies, including the hiring of correctional deputies by other law enforcement departments (33 in the past 5 years), the termination of Deputies (8 in the last 5 years), the promotion of deputies (21 in the past 5 years), and the retirement of 36 deputies.

Additionally, a number of deputies have left the Department for unspecified "personal reasons" (see Figure 1). However, since neither the Sheriff's Department, nor the correctional deputies' union conduct exit interviews, the specific reasons for their decision to leave the department remain unknown.

F4. In the past year, the Sheriff's Department has added additional personnel to assist in the processing of employment applications, including permanent personnel and the use

of extra help, light duty deputies and correctional deputies. This effort has substantially reduced the time required to conduct background checks and other post-offer, pre-placement screening.

F5. The safety and loss prevention efforts of the Sheriff's Department and the Risk Management Division of the County Human Resource's Department have been significant factors in the reduction of Industrial Injury claims and have greatly aided in reducing the number of overtime hours in the Corrections Division.

F6. Another substantial reason for the decrease of the number of overtime hours required has been the significant decline in the number of hours lost. The number of industrial injury indemnity claims (claims resulting in time lost from work), has declined from 168 claims in 2001-2002 to 78 claims in 2006-2007. From 2004 to 2006, the number of days lost due to indemnity claims has declined from 1742 in 2004 to 793 in 2005, and has further declined in 2006 to 411 days. As each day lost results in additional days of required overtime, this significant reduction in days lost results in an equal reduction in the number of required overtime hours.

F7. In reviewing the number of overtime hours in recent years, the grand jury discovered the following factors:

- In 2004, the average number of overtime hours mandated for MADF was 26.0 hours per month. The number of hours for NCDF was 18.0 hours (see Figure 2)
- In 2005, the number of hours was 6.0 for MADF and 9.0 hours for NCDF (see Figure 3)
- In 2006, mandatory overtime hours for MADF were 28 hours per month and 17.0 hours for NCDF (see Figure 4)
- In 2007, MADF averaged 13.0 mandatory overtime hours per month and NCDF averaged 4.0 hours per month.

The grand jury sees this as a significant improvement.

## **Conclusion**

The Sheriff's Department, together with the Risk Management Division of the Human Resources Department, has made great strides toward reducing the number of mandatory overtime hours. The County Sheriff's stated goal of reducing all mandatory overtime to a point where overtime is voluntary may well be realized in the near future.

## **Commendations**

The Sheriff's Department and the Risk Management Division of Human Resources are to be commended for their extraordinary efforts in reducing the number of industrial injury claims, which has had a direct impact on reducing the number of required overtime hours.

## **Recommendations**

R1. The grand jury recommends that the Sheriff's Department continue its efforts to hire additional correctional deputies as vacancies occur.

R2. The Risk Management Division of Human Resources should continue its very effective management of industrial injury claims through its Disability Management Unit.

**Required responses to Findings**

None

**Required responses to Recommendations**

Sonoma County Sheriff, R1

Sonoma County Risk Manager, R2

**Requested responses to Recommendations**

None

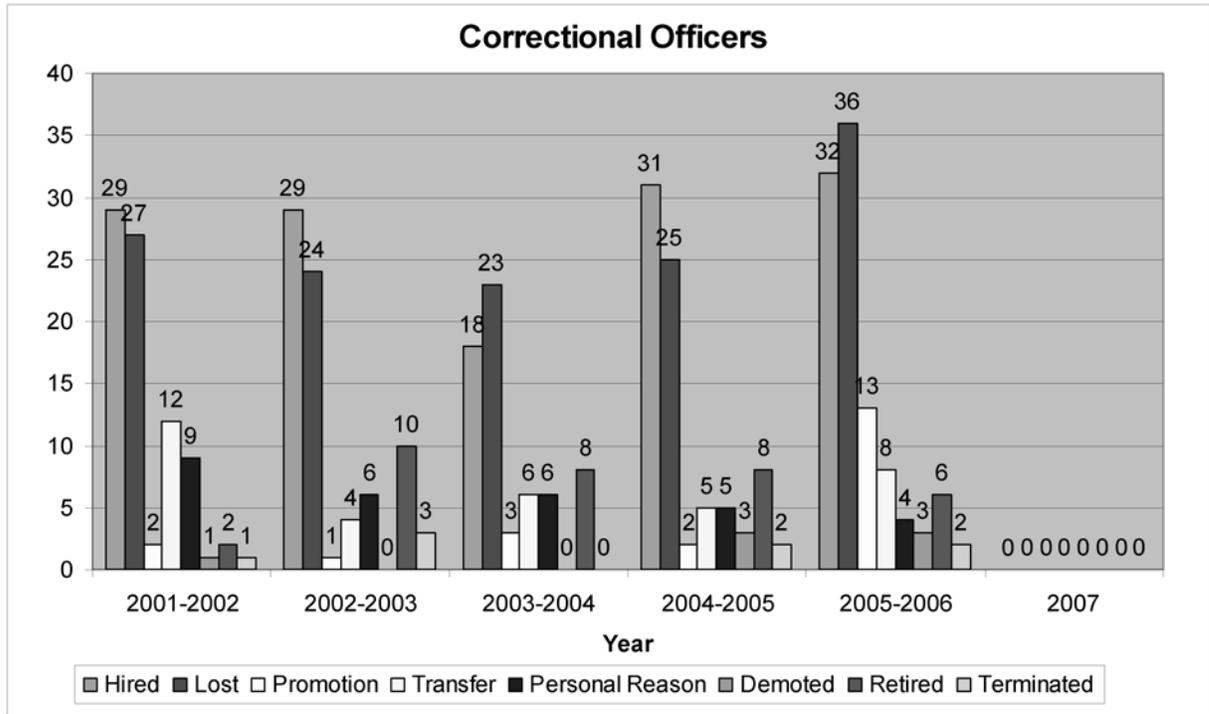


Figure 1

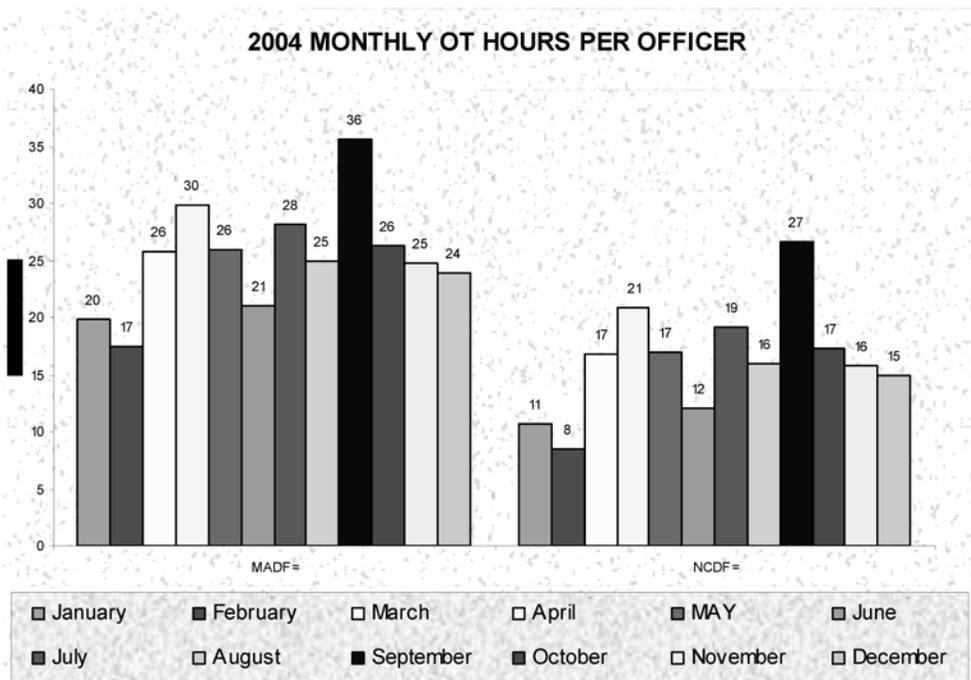


Figure 2

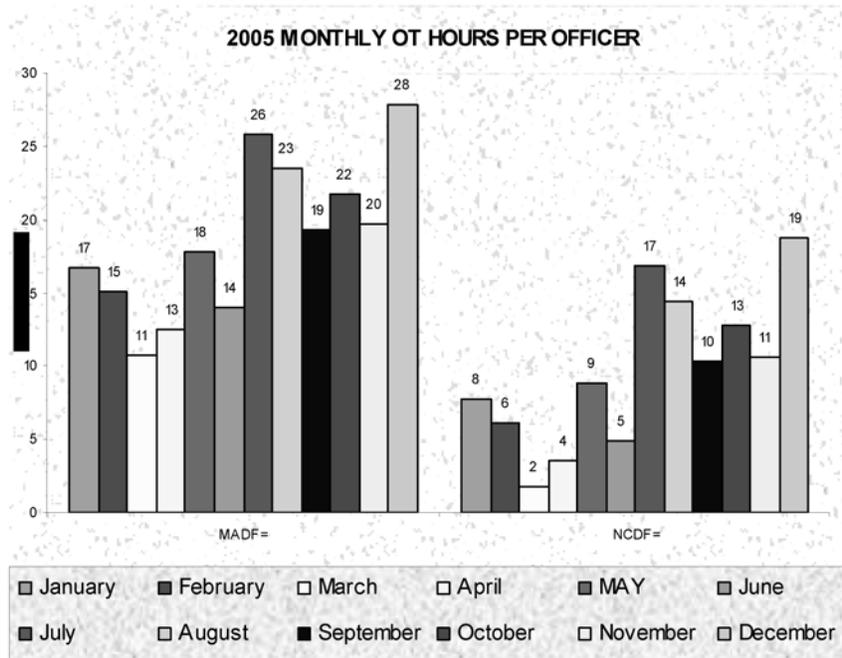


Figure 3

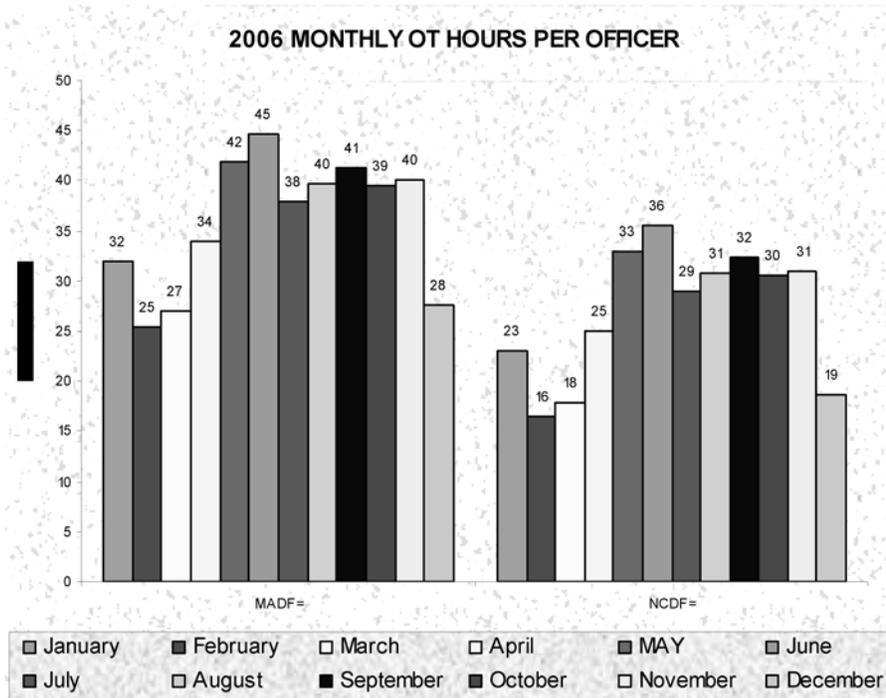


Figure 4