



# Sonoma County Sheriff's Department

August 26, 2004

#1875

*Rec. 8/30/04  
CWS*  
**BILL COGBILL**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**GARY A. ZANOLINI**  
Assistant Sheriff  
Law Enforcement Division

**MICHAEL M. COSTA**  
Assistant Sheriff  
Detention Division

SEP 14 10 00 AM '04

The Honorable Allan Hardcastle  
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court  
County of Sonoma  
600 Administration Drive  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

# GRAND JURY

Dear Judge Hardcastle:

Attached please find the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department response to the 2003-2004 Grand Jury Report.

Sincerely,

**BILL COGBILL**  
Sheriff-Coroner

BC/mb  
F:\Grand Jury\2004\Ltr-Response.doc

cc w/Attachments: Board of Supervisors  
Court Executive Officer  
County Administrator  
County Clerk

Administration Division  
2796 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
707.565.2781

Law Enforcement Division  
2796 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
707.565.2511

Detention Division  
2777 Ventura Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
707.565.1422

Coroner  
3336 Chanate Road  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
707.565.5070

**SONOMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT  
RESPONSE TO THE 2003-2004 GRAND JURY REPORT**

**Correctional Officer Overtime, Understaffing and Injury in the County Jail**

***FINDINGS – Pages 26-28***

***F6 – Most correctional officers are willing to forgo some overtime in exchange for more free time and more control over their work schedules. A few correctional officers are willing to give up all overtime.***

**RESPONSE:** The respondent agrees with the finding.

***F7 – Most overtime hours are planned a year in advance. Since fiscal year 1997-98, between 70% and 90% of all Detention Division annual overtime hours were anticipated at the time the budget was approved by the Board of Supervisors. Beginning fiscal year 2000-01, 85% or more of overtime hours were budgeted.***

**RESPONSE:** The respondent agrees with the finding.

***F19 – When disability costs are considered, it is often cost effective to hire more permanent correctional officers than to fill positions with overtime hours.***

**RESPONSE:** The respondent agrees with the finding.

***F24 – On May 5, 2004, the Board of Supervisors approved the hiring of 10 more correctional officers. But even with 10 additional officers, the jail is still understaffed. At 80.3% availability, 10 are not likely to reduce all Detention Division overtime hours by more than 16–17%, or fixed-post overtime hours by more than 19–20%.***

**RESPONSE:** The respondent agrees with the finding.

**Correctional Officer Overtime, Understaffing and Injury in the County Jail  
(Cont'd)**

*F25 – In a nation-wide study of correctional officer stress, the National Institute of Justice reports that “stress is widespread and, in many cases, severe--and possibly increasing--among correctional officers.”*

- *Primary causes are “rotating work shifts, lack of opportunity for career advancement, frustration with supervisors’ leadership styles and demands, understaffing, and mandatory overtime.”*
- *Lowering stress will “reduce excessive sick leave as a means of coping with stress on the job,...the need to pay overtime to cover for officers on sick leave or who quit because of work-related stress, reduce the time officers need off after a critical incident before returning to work, reduce fees paid into the retirement fund because of fewer stress-related early retirements, improve officer performance through higher staff morale, and increase institutional safety through fewer inexperienced officers on duty and fewer officer distractions with work-related and personal stresses.”*
- *Among the recommendations to reduce organizational stress, the report includes making overtime voluntary and improving the shift schedule to a 3-12 shift arrangement (already in use in the Sonoma County Jails) or “5 days on, 7 days off” to create a “mini-vacation every other week.” (Finn, 2000.)*

RESPONSE: The respondent agrees with the finding.

***RECOMMENDATION, Page 30 (R1)***

***Survey all correctional officers to learn how much overtime they desire.***

RESPONSE:

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

A survey instrument will be distributed to all correctional officers in August 2004. The survey instrument will be analyzed and the findings reviewed in September 2004.

**Correctional Officer Overtime, Understaffing and Injury in the County Jail  
(Cont'd)**

***RECOMMENDATION, Page 30 (R2)***

***Develop a policy that balances the need for overtime against the need to minimize fatigue, prevent injuries and illness, and maintain morale.***

**RESPONSE:**

The recommendation has been implemented and will be improved in the future.

The need for overtime is directly related to 24-hour "fixed post" positions and adequate staffing levels. The current overtime sign-up process for mandatory overtime attempts to distribute this tremendous burden as equitably as possible. Unplanned/last minute overtime (sick relief, emergency FMLA, etc.) is first offered to on-duty personnel on a voluntary basis. If no one volunteers, the supervisor assigns the overtime based on the total number of hours worked in the previous 30-day period. The employee with the fewest hours worked is assigned the overtime.

This overtime assignment process was developed in collaboration with the correctional officers' union, Sonoma County Law Enforcement Association (SCLEA), and is currently under review for revision. Changes mutually agreed upon will be implemented no later than October 2004.

We must also evaluate our training and the Injury and Illness Prevention Program. Increased emphasis over the past 14 months on safety issues has resulted in an approximate 11.5% decrease in lost-time work injuries. Although we are moving in the right direction, we must continue to focus on safety down at the line level, including training, personal health and fitness, and injury prevention practices.

A review of FY 2003-2004 reportable work injuries will be conducted and analyzed no later than December 2004.

***RECOMMENDATION, Page 30 (R3)***

***Hire sufficient staff to enable a voluntary overtime system.***

**RESPONSE:**

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

**Correctional Officer Overtime, Understaffing and Injury in the County Jail  
(Cont'd)**

The recent addition of ten new correctional officer allocations is the result of three successive budget cycle requests. Funding of these positions is balanced against the overall priorities of the County and the Department.

Our goal is to eliminate "mandatory overtime." We will continue to request additional correctional officer allocations in the upcoming budget cycle for FY 2005-2006.

***RECOMMENDATION, Page 30 (R4)***

***Change the overtime sign-up procedure so hours can be fairly distributed without officers having to wait on their own time for sign ups to begin.***

**RESPONSE:**

The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

As mentioned in R2 above, the overtime assignment process was developed in collaboration with the correctional officers' union, Sonoma County Law Enforcement Association (SCLEA), and is currently under review for revision. Changes mutually agreed upon will be implemented no later than October 2004. Any changes must go through the meet and confer process with SCLEA.

In May 2004, SCLEA recommended a rotational, seniority sign-up process for overtime. This change would have eliminated officers having to wait, on his or her own time, to sign up for mandatory overtime. The Detention Division management supported this proposal. Unfortunately, when SCLEA took this proposal to their membership, the proposal was rejected.

Sergeant Mazan Awad attended the American Jails Association Conference in March 2004. During this conference he visited a vendor's booth advertising an automated scheduling program. He arranged for a demonstration of this product on July 20, 2004 to the Detention Management Team.

The Detention Management Team was extremely impressed with the features offered by this product. Of import to this recommendation, this program would eliminate the manual, monthly overtime sign-up processes.

The Detention Management Team will prepare a recommendation to the Sheriff for completion of a Request for Proposal, no later than November 2004, to acquire this or a similar product.