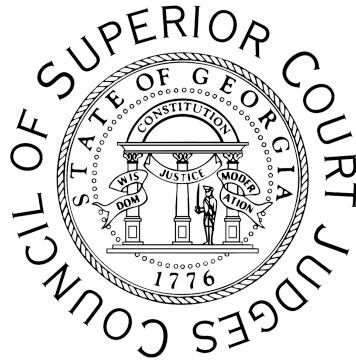


# Georgia Standards for the Security of Courthouses and Other Court Facilities



*Georgia Council of Superior Court Judges*



*Georgia Sheriffs' Association*



Advancing Georgia's Counties.

*Association of County Commissioners of Georgia*

Revised January 2018



## Council of Superior Court Judges of Georgia

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The tragic shooting in 2005 at the Fulton County Courthouse led to the passage of Senate Bill 462 by the Georgia General Assembly during the 2006 legislative session. This act revised the state law on the duties of sheriffs to require them to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for the security of county courthouses. The Chief Judge of each circuit is to review that plan and make any modifications deemed appropriate. The sheriff is the official custodian of the comprehensive courthouse security plan and is required to review the plan not less than every four years.

The Council of Superior Court Judges remains committed to the security of our courthouses. In the past year, our Special Committee on Court Security was reconstituted as a standing committee to continue the work of improving the safety and security of all individuals who work in and visit Georgia's courthouses.

First published in 2006, the Georgia Standards for the Security of Courthouses and Other Court Facilities was updated five years ago. Our Court Security Committee, the Georgia Sheriffs' Association, and the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) have invested significant amounts of time over the past year to revise and enhance the courthouse security standards. The enclosed revised standards are the continued effort to improve safety and security.

A safe environment at Georgia's courthouses is necessary for everyone. With the recent revisions to the court security standards, it is our hope that we will improve on our previous efforts to protect our citizens when they need court services, and that we will provide safety for court staff as they fulfill their duties in our courts.

Judge Kathy Palmer  
President  
Council of Superior Court Judges



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November 17, 2017

Dear Sheriff,

As you are well aware, the legislature passed an act in 2006 that mandated sheriffs to develop comprehensive security plans for their respective courthouses and other court facilities. Enclosed you will find the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of *Courthouse Security Standards*. These standards were developed in conjunction with the Council of Superior Court Judges and we sincerely appreciate their partnering with our association in this very crucial arena of our many duties. A great deal of time and expense has gone into this document and I believe you will find it to be an invaluable resource.

Among other things, the code requires you to perform a formal review of your security plan every four years. As you are about to start another term of office, or your first term for you new sheriffs, this would be an excellent time to make sure the security measures you already have in place conform with these standards.

Please contact Bill Hallsworth at GSA in Stockbridge should you have any questions regarding the publication.

Yours truly,

Terry Deese, Sheriff  
Peach County  
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December 14, 2017

The incident in Fulton County in 2005 which resulted in the death of Superior Court Judge, court reporter and Sheriff's deputy led to legislation which requires the Sheriffs to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for the security of county courthouses and court facilities. These security plans are developed to protect judges, court personnel and county personnel working in the court facilities as well as the public. The standards were first put in place in 2006, revised and expanded in 2013.

Due to technological advances, new legislation, recent architectural approaches to the construction of judicial facilities, and experience gained since 2013, the Georgia Council of Superior Court Judges spearheaded an effort to yet again revise and expand and update the Georgia Standards for the Security of Courthouses. The Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) greatly appreciates the Superior Court Judges including us in the review and updating of the standards and recognizing that every county has a different financial reality, therefore these standards are not mandates, but every effort should be made to implement as budgets allow.

The new edition of the Georgia Standards for the Security of Courthouses and Other Court Facilities are being provided to you by the Council of Superior Court Judges in cooperation with the Georgia Sheriffs Association and ACCG.

We welcome this opportunity to work with the Council of Superior Court Judges and the Georgia Sheriff's Association to provide greater protection for the citizens of this state through the use of these standards.

Sincerely,

Allen Poole  
ACCG President

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## FOREWORD

On March 11, 2005, a judge and a court reporter were murdered in a Fulton County, Georgia, courtroom by Brian Nichols, a man facing a charge of rape. Nichols had been held in the custody of the Fulton County Jail pending his criminal trial. In addition to the murders of the judge and the court reporter, during his escape from the courthouse, Nichols murdered a sergeant with the Fulton County Sheriff's Office and severely beat a female deputy Sheriff. It was her service weapon that Nichols used to commit the murders. After his escape from the courthouse, Nichols murdered a federal agent before he was re-captured. This was a sensational news story that received nationwide coverage. Since that time, there have been multiple incidents of courthouse and courtroom violence across the nation. Some have been sensationalized through national media coverage due to the nature of the violence, while countless others have remained unknown except at the local level.

In 2006, the Council of Superior Court Judges (Council) and Georgia Sheriffs' Association Inc. (Association) collaborated to develop *minimum voluntary* standards for Georgia's courthouses. The effort resulted in the publication of Courthouse Security Standards which were later revised in 2012. Based upon the technological advances, new architectural approaches to the construction of judicial facilities, and lessons learned from events of the last decade it has become necessary to again revise and expand these standards to keep the courts of this state safe and secure while being open to the public. The Council and the Association are now joined by the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (Commissioners) in this effort.

It is the belief of the Council, the Association and the Commissioners that basic standards, once adopted at the local level, will raise the level of security for Georgia's courthouses and courthouse annexes. By applying some or all of these voluntary standards, our judges, Sheriffs and commissioners are taking steps to raise awareness of security concerns and protect the lives and well-being of all individuals within the confines of the courthouse, while maintaining the integrity of the critical business that must be conducted within these structures. It is important to emphasize that compliance with these standards is strictly *voluntary*. These standards have not been developed in response to civil litigation, unlike most standards for law enforcement; these standards were developed to help Georgia's Sheriffs establish and maintain a safe environment within their respective courthouses.

In the 2006 Legislative Session, the General Assembly amended Article 1 of Chapter 16 of Title 15 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to general provisions for Sheriffs. The new law established certain requirements of judges and Sheriffs to include the following:

- Development and implementation of a comprehensive plan for the security of the county courthouse and any courthouse annex;
- Submission of the plan to the chief judge of the superior court of the circuit wherein the courthouse or courthouse annex is located for review;
- Provision by the Sheriff to the commissioners of the estimated cost of any security plan and a schedule for implementation 30 days prior to the adoption of any security plan;

- Designation of the Sheriff as the official custodian of the comprehensive courthouse security plan with the authority to determine who has access to such plan and any such access;
- Availability of the original security plan available upon request for temporary, exclusive review by any judge whose courthouse or chambers is located in the courthouse or annex, or by any commissioner of the county in which the courthouse or annex is located; and
- Responsibility of the Sheriff to conduct a formal review of the security plan not less than every four (4) years.

The legislation also provides that the courthouse security plan shall be considered a confidential matter of public security and excluded from public disclosure as is referenced in O.C.G.A. §§ 50-14-1 and 50-14-3. Additionally, the development and implementation of a security plan and all related technology pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 15-16-10 shall be subject to the annual budget approved for the Office of Sheriff by the commissioners.

It is **mandatory** that all Sheriffs dedicate themselves to developing a comprehensive court security plan. A courthouse facility survey will identify what assets are currently in place, what areas are in need of attention and what steps can be taken to correct any shortcomings in the security for the facility.

Based on this guide, there are examples of court security assessment forms and other useful court security plans and check sheets. The forms are a good starting point for assessing your strengths and weaknesses, however, these forms will not address every situation in every facility, so local allowances and adjustments should be made. The assessment forms will point out staffing shortcomings as well.

It is the sincere desire of the Association, the Council and the Commissioners that the standards will serve to accomplish the foregoing goals, improve the level of courthouse security provided throughout the state, and help Sheriffs comply with the statutes regarding courthouse security. Moreover, we hope this guide will benefit every citizen of the State of Georgia.

## INTRODUCTION TO STANDARDS

Standards define how courthouses should be designed and operated. Standards vary in form, content and applicability. Organizations and agencies such as the National Sheriffs' Association and the United States Marshal's Service have developed standards for courthouse security.

Most entities' standards are concerned with protection. Through court security standards it is possible to provide better protection for the public, courthouse staff and officials, litigants, and inmates. This is achieved by defining how court security should be operated and (in some instances) by providing a mechanism for determining whether courthouses measure up to the standards.

Realizing that the keys to proper levels of courthouse security and citizen protection are found in underdeveloped standards, the Georgia Sheriffs' Association's and Council of Superior Court Judges' standards were established to develop security standards statewide that would provide guidance and direction in the construction, renovation and operation of courthouses. These standards do not represent legal opinion; they are intended to be used as information only.

Although developed as advisory guidelines, the Association designed the standards to reflect current operational policies and practices for court facilities. Accordingly, Sheriffs are encouraged to evaluate their operational policies and procedures against these standards, and then develop a plan for remedial action where necessary. In this way, Sheriffs could conduct their own facility audits, identify issues, and make necessary changes. Ultimately, this use of the standards will help them become more proactive and knowledgeable in solving management and operational problems regarding court security. The standards can also be used to provide local governments and their communities with a clear understanding of the risks and concerns regarding security and delivery of governmental services, including judicial proceedings, that are required of the county's governing authority and its duly elected constitutional officers. This most recent edition of the standards is the result of a unified effort by the Council of Superior Court Judges, the Georgia Sheriffs Association and the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia to better protect the citizens of Georgia and to facilitate cooperation at the local level to raise the level of security in Georgia courts and court buildings.



# Section One

## Administration and Management

### Chapter One

#### Administration and Management

**Principle:** Georgia statutes have become increasingly stringent regarding the Sheriff's presence at the courthouse, and the role of the Sheriff regarding courthouse security. Increased awareness of the threat of terrorism, including domestic terrorism, and violence in public places, including government-operated facilities requires a more visible law enforcement presence within court and government buildings. Management of these concerns is a highly organized and complex process requiring extensive planning. Important to this process is the need for Sheriffs to have means available to identify problems, develop possible solutions, and implement changes. In order to be successful throughout this process, a three-way information flow must be available between the Sheriff, courthouse staff, and the governing authority.

#### **Sheriff's Office within the Courthouse**

- 1.01** Written policies and procedures shall provide for the Sheriff to maintain and operate an office within the courthouse.

**Comment:**

The hours of operation of the Sheriff's office within the courthouse must, at a minimum, comply with O.C.G.A. § 15-16-9, "at the same places and on the same terms as the clerk of the superior court [...]." This is interpreted to mean during the hours the office of the clerk of the superior court is open. Some Sheriff's offices may be in a location other than a courthouse or courthouse annex. While this is acceptable, each courthouse and courthouse annex(es) should have a designated space for the Sheriff's office for public contact as well.

#### **Court Security Officers - Court Security Deputy**

- 1.02** Written policies and procedures shall provide for the assignment of deputy Sheriffs to provide courthouse security. There should be one (1) deputy assigned primary responsibility to be in charge of courthouse security, to act as liaison between the Sheriff's office and the other offices located within the courthouse and courthouse annex(es). This deputy should be the responsible authority for scheduling security personnel, assigning other deputies various security-related tasks, and maintaining equipment and building infrastructure that are integral components of courthouse security. While assigned to this function, court security officers should not have any other assignments that would leave the courthouse unprotected.

**Comment:**

In the course of business, it is understandable that the senior deputy assigned to courthouse security may have other responsibilities such as service of civil papers, administrative duties and the like. It must be stressed that while the courthouse or courthouse annex is open to the public, there be at least one (1) deputy available for the courthouse security duties noted.

**Command Authority**

- 1.03** Written policies and procedures shall provide that the deputy in charge of courthouse security has the authority to assign other personnel to court security related tasks as needed.

**Comment:**

This should not be construed to mean the deputy in charge of court security has the authority to re-assign personnel between divisions or units. That authority rests solely with the Sheriff or designee. Likewise, written policies and procedures should reflect, whenever possible, the assignment process and what limited roles, if any, additional personnel may be assigned to as well as what training and qualifications that other deputies may be required to have.

**Operations Manual**

- 1.04** The deputy in charge of court security shall ensure that an operations manual which delineates the policies and procedures for providing for the security of the courthouse and all courthouse annexes is written. This manual shall be made available to employees located in county court buildings, reviewed annually, and updated as needed. This manual should fully implement the approved version of the comprehensive courthouse security plan.

**Comment:**

Each employee located in the court building or involved in the operation of the Court should be issued a copy of the operations manual, or equivalent document, and trained on its contents. The operations manual should be a separate document from the comprehensive courthouse security plan.

**Emergency Procedures**

- 1.05** Written policies and procedures should address a broad range of emergency situations such as medical emergencies, bomb threats, escape, assaults, fire, and weather-related disturbances.

**Comment:**

Many of these policies may be included in the Courthouse Security Plan as required by O.C.G.A. § 15-16-10(a)(10) or in the Courthouse Emergency Operations Plan as required by Superior Court Uniform Rule No. 45. Such policies and procedures should be reviewed regularly.

## **Dissemination of Revised Policy and Procedure**

- 1.06** Written policies and procedures shall provide for the dissemination of approved, new or revised policies and procedures to designated full and part-time staff and volunteers.

**Comment:**

As a best practice, training on these policies and procedures should be conducted at least annually for full and part-time security staff and volunteers.

## **Employee Communication**

- 1.07** Written policies and procedures shall provide that clear channels of communication and authority are established for all personnel. Regular channels of communication are necessary for delegating authority, assigning responsibility, supervising work, and coordinating efforts.

**Comment:**

As a best practice, training on these policies and procedures should be conducted at least annually for full and part-time security staff and volunteers.

## **Court Security Officer Qualifications**

- 1.08** The deputy in charge of courthouse security should have adequate law enforcement experience and training to facilitate decision-making regarding deployment and utilization of personnel and other resources related to maintaining a safe and secure environment within the courthouse and courthouse annex(es).

Written policies and procedures shall provide that all deputy personnel assigned courthouse security duties should be physically able to perform all law enforcement functions expected of said deputies and possess the interpersonal skills required of the assignment.

**Comment:**

Additionally, court security officers should all have experience working around people in custody or under arrest, as weapons retention around such people is paramount. Obviously, court security officers must have or be able to obtain peace officer certification from the Georgia Peace Officers' Standards and Training Council. Certified jail or detention officers can be used to staff prisoner holding areas within the courthouse or maintain prisoner security within the courtroom, but only if there are certified deputy Sheriffs also present in the courtroom. Prisoner security is the only function jail or detention officers can fulfill.

As a best practice, court security officers should be trained in basic court security responsibilities. They should receive initial classroom instruction on courtroom security techniques, judicial and staff protection, security screening activities, firearm operation, threat de-escalation techniques and

safety and weapons certification. They should also receive basic scenario or hands-on training in emergency response, first-aid, defensive tactics, handcuffing, courtroom security, hostage situations, active-shooters, and judicial protection. All court security officers should receive at least twenty-four (24) hours of in-service training on court security each year.

### **Development of Courthouse Security Plan**

- 1.09** Written policies and procedures shall provide that the Sheriff or designee develop a comprehensive, written security plan for the county courthouse and all county courthouse annexes.

**Comment:**

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 15-16-10(a)(10), a court security plan is required and must be reviewed at least every 4 years.

### **Judicial Review and Approval of Courthouse Security Plan**

- 1.10** The courthouse security plan shall be reviewed and amended as deemed necessary by the chief judge of the superior court for the county. Amendments to the Sheriff's submitted plan should be discussed with the chief judge and the Sheriff before approval. Once the chief judge approves the plan, it should be signed by the Sheriff and the judge.

**Comment:**

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 15-16-10(a)(10), "The chief judge shall have 30 days to review the original or any subsequent security plan. The chief judge may make modifications to the original or any subsequent security plan."

### **Review of Cost of Courthouse Security Plan by Governing Authority**

- 1.11** The Sheriff or designee shall prepare a cost projection for personnel and other resources required to implement the security plan. No part of the plan should be implemented until after the commissioners have the opportunity to review the projected cost of implementation for 30 days.

**Comment:**

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 15-16-10(a)(10), "The Sheriff shall provide to the county governing authority the estimated cost of any security plan and a schedule for implementation 30 days prior to adoption of any security plan."

### **Confidentiality of Court Security Plan**

- 1.12** Written policies and procedures shall designate the Sheriff as the official custodian of the court security plan and provide that the courthouse security plan is maintained by the Sheriff or designee as a confidential document, exempt from laws requiring public inspection of governmental documents. The Sheriff shall determine who has access to the plan, and inspection of the

plan must occur in the Sheriff's office or at a meeting of the county governing authority.

**Comment:**

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 15-16-10(a)(10), "A comprehensive plan for courthouse security shall be considered a confidential matter of public security." Any meeting of the county governing authority during which contents of the courthouse security plan are reviewed or discussed is exempt from being an "open" meeting, accessible to public attendance while the contents of the plan are being reviewed or discussed.

**Availability of Security Plan for Periodic Inspection by Judges or County Commissioners**

- 1.13** Written policies and procedures shall provide that the security plan will be available for exclusive review by any judge whose chambers or courtroom is located within the affected courthouse or courthouse annex, or by any commissioner of the county where the courthouse or courthouse annex is located.

**Comment:**

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 15-16-10(a)(10), "the Sheriff shall make the original security plan available upon request for temporary, exclusive review by any judge whose courtroom or chambers is located within the courthouse or courthouse annex."

**Periodic Formal Review of Security Plan by Sheriff**

- 1.14** Written policies and procedures shall provide that the security plan will be formally reviewed by the Sheriff no less often than every four (4) years.

**Comment:**

Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 15-16-10(a)(10), amendments or adjustments to the plan may be enacted at any time by the Sheriff, with the approval of the chief judge of the superior court of the county.

**Court Security Committee**

- 1.15** Written policies and procedures shall provide that the Sheriff should meet periodically with other officials and their employees having offices in the courthouse or any courthouse annex of the county to discuss security and safety concerns relating to the courthouse or courthouse annex.

**Comment:**

Establishing a formal committee is not necessary, as long as there is open, two-way communication between the Sheriff's office and other entities located in the courthouse or courthouse annex through formal meetings, training, or orientation sessions. Formal committees must understand that

their role is advisory only. Such committees are an appropriate forum to discuss and plan for needed security training and emergency drills.

As a best practice, a court building security committee, meeting regularly and empowered to provide input on and sustain matters related to security within the court building, is a prerequisite to enable the court and its stakeholders to properly assess and address the myriad of security challenges facing court and stakeholder leadership. Steps for creating such a committee may include:

1. Establish a court building security committee for the court building, to be chaired by a judge (preferably a chief or presiding judge) and having membership of at least the Sheriff or designee and a representative of the commissioners or other governing authority.
2. The court building security committee should operate its meetings on an action planning process of “who does what, by when, and what resources are needed.” The committee should initially meet monthly to discuss and implement recommendations contained in this report. Then, it should meet at least quarterly to discuss and propose solutions to other security problems.
3. The judge or court administrator should meet with court security personnel and law enforcement officials on a regular basis and after any negative event to discuss security concerns.
4. The committee should have among its members representatives of all “stakeholders” who have an interest in security at the court building. Stakeholders, by way of example, include county facilities management, the district attorney, solicitor, public defender, the state or local bar, and probation and community supervision, as well as other non-court tenants of the court building. In terms of the size of the committee, a balance should be struck between inclusivity of stakeholders and the need to keep the committee at a manageable size.
5. Add security-based planning responsibility under the committee for court facility design, construction, and renovation projects.

# Chapter Two

## Personnel

**Principle:** There is no intent by this chapter to support or reject the establishment of civil service systems. Rather, these standards have been developed to assist Sheriffs in implementing sound personnel practices with regard to court security personnel. In order to develop a strong foundation on which to build this system, facility administrators must ensure that the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform a particular job successfully are identified. With this information, the most qualified persons may then be recruited, selected, trained, retained, and promoted.

### Personnel Plan

**2.01** The Sheriff's office shall have a written personnel plan governing the selection, training, promotion, discipline and retention of courthouse security personnel.

**Comment:**

Security personnel assigned to a security screening system and all court security officers<sup>1</sup> should be trained on specific screening aspects. To counter the significant factors and limits of fatigue, complacency, and patience, schedules for court security officers should be carefully thought out.

### Selection Criteria

**2.02** Job-related criteria shall be used to select, evaluate, and promote personnel.

Personnel assigned as security personnel shall be certified by the Georgia Peace Officer's Standards and Training Council as peace officers. Personnel assigned to the courthouse and certified by the Georgia Peace Officer's Standards and Training Council as jail or detention officers and do not possess certification as a peace officer can be tasked only with inmate security responsibilities.

**Comment:**

Internal procedures with the Sheriff's Office should outline these procedures.

### Criminal Records Check

**2.03** A criminal records check shall be conducted on all new courthouse employees, in accordance with current state and federal statutes, to ascertain whether there are any criminal convictions which have a specific relationship to job performance. The Sheriff, governing authority, or other employing

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this guide, the term Court Security Officer, or CSO, is used to identify personnel who are sworn peace officers certified by the Georgia Peace Officer's Standards and Training Council and who have court security responsibilities. Terms such as security personnel or staff refer to these positions.

official should know of any criminal conviction that could directly affect an employee's job performance in a courthouse setting.

**Comment:**

This standard applies not only to court security personnel but all personnel employed by county government and working in the courthouse. The requirement extends to independent contractors working anywhere within the courthouse, courthouse annex, or courthouse campus.

**Code of Ethics**

**2.04** A written code of ethics that prohibits employees from using their official position to secure privileges for themselves or others and from engaging in activities that constitute a conflict of interest should be provided to all employees.

**Comment:**

To protect the integrity of the justice system and the Sheriff's office, all Sheriff's personnel must be thoroughly familiar with the code of ethics, and the code must be strictly enforced.

**Confidentiality of Information**

**2.05** Written policy, procedure, and practice provide that Sheriff's office personnel and any consultants and contract personnel who work with inmates are informed in writing about the Sheriff's office policies on confidentiality of information and agree to abide by them.

**Comment:**

The written policies should specify what types of information are confidential between worker and inmate, what types of information should be shared with other Sheriff's office personnel, and what types can be communicated to persons outside the Sheriff's office.



# Chapter Three

## Training

**Principle:** In recent years, litigation involving the absence of training has put emphasis on a process that starts prior to actual job assignment and follows employees throughout their career. Training offers substantial benefits to both the authority and the employee. Training prepares employees to act correctly and decisively in a broad spectrum of circumstances; it increases efficiency and effectiveness; and, it fosters cooperation and unity of purpose.

When training is omitted, whether intentionally or not, many courts have ruled this to be a sufficient basis for liability. Litigation in this area has been initiated by inmates, the general public, and staff. The extent of liability to policy makers, budget officers and Sheriff's staff is just beginning to come into clear focus by the courts.

These standards acknowledge that training is the glue that binds all court building security measures together. Security training needs to be frequent, repetitive and simple. Without training, staff and court security officers will never be prepared for the unexpected. Every staff member and court security officer needs security training. It is essential that training be mandatory and universal. Judges in particular also need to participate. Nothing gets staff to buy in to security more than a judge actively participating in security training. The judge sets the tone.

### Training Coordination

**3.01** Policy, procedure, and practice provide that the facility's employee staff development and training programs are planned, coordinated and supervised by a qualified employee. The training plan is reviewed annually.

**Comment:**

The training plan should include all pre-service, in-service and specialized training curriculums with specific timelines for completing each training unit. All personnel assigned to court security duties should attend specialized training devoted to the subject of courthouse and courtroom security at least annually.

### Outside Resources

**3.02** Written policy, procedure, and practice provide that the training and staff development program should use outside resources when appropriate.

**Comment:**

Outside guidance and assistance for the facility's training program can take the form of materials, equipment, course development, and evaluation techniques.

## Training Plan

**3.03** The training plan is developed, evaluated, and updated based on an annual assessment that identifies current job-related training needs.

### **Comment:**

Training should be responsive to position requirements, professional development needs, current law enforcement and security issues, and new theories, techniques, and technologies. The annual needs assessment may require information from many sources: observation and analysis of job components; staff surveys regarding training needs; reviews of agency/facility operations; staff reports; and evaluations and findings from sources within and without the jurisdiction.

Best practices for training include:

- ✓ Court security officers should be trained in basic court security responsibilities. Court security officers should receive initial classroom instruction on courtroom security techniques, judicial and staff protection, security screening activities, firearm operation, threat de-escalation techniques and safety and weapons certification.
- ✓ Court security officers should receive basic training in emergency response, first-aid, defensive tactics, handcuffing, courtroom security, hostage situations, active-shooters, and judicial protection.
- ✓ Command center staff should be trained in critical incident command and crisis communications.
- ✓ All court security officers should receive at least twenty-four (24) hours of in-service training on court security each year.
- ✓ Training developed with the assistance of the Council should provide ongoing security and safety education programs for judges and court staff that include topics addressed in the initial security orientation briefing, along with such topics as handling difficult people, anger-management, home safety techniques, safety practices for inside and outside the court building, hostage incidents, and emergency evacuation from the court building.
- ✓ In addition to annual familiarization and qualification courses on firearms and intermediate weapons, suggestions for preferred regularly scheduled advanced refresher training courses include emergency response, first-aid, defensive tactics, handcuffing, courtroom security, hostage situations, active-shooters, and judicial protection.
- ✓ Suggestions for advanced court security training programs for court security officers include threat de-escalation, security assessments, judicial protection, incident response, dangerous individuals, mental health issues, and high threat proceedings.

## **Reimbursement**

- 3.04** Court security budgets should include funds to reimburse staff for additional time spent in training or for replacement personnel required when regular personnel are off-duty for training purposes.

**Comment:**

As additional training requirements are implemented and as outlined in the Court Security Plan, every effort should be made to provide estimates of the cost of court security-related training to the governing authority.

## **Continuing Education**

- 3.05** The facility administration encourages employees to continue their education and provides reimbursement for attending approved professional meetings, seminars and similar work-related activities.

**Comment:**

As additional training requirements are implemented and as outlined in the Court Security Plan, every effort should be made to provide estimates of the cost of court security-related training to the governing authority.

## **On-the-Job Training**

- 3.06** Written policy, procedure, and practice provide that on-the-job training is given to enhance the performance of all employees during their initial assignment to court security duties. A written training outline should be used to insure consistency in training.

**Comment:**

On-the-job training provided by experienced staff personnel can be a very important method for transferring information. Designated training officers or a formal Field Training Officer program is recommended.

## **Training for Civilian Bailiffs**

- 3.07** Any and all persons serving as a civilian bailiff should receive basic court security training and orientation offered by POST, other certified agencies/institutions, or in-house training instructors, at the time of appointment as a civilian bailiff. The training should include classroom lecture as well practical exercises involving courtroom/courthouse scenarios. Civilian bailiffs should be provided an updated orientation at least annually to ensure familiarity and compliance with policy changes and/or new procedures.

**Comment:**

Law enforcement training provided to civilian personnel would be for informational or orientation purposes only. Civilian personnel should be

discouraged from taking law enforcement action. Site specific training must be included. The additional training or orientation should outline the responsibilities of civilian bailiffs for each court.

### **Training for All Courthouse Employees**

**3.08** All persons employed by the county and who regularly work in the courthouse or courthouse annex should receive familiarization training regarding actions they should take during various emergency situations consistent with the emergency plans developed for Sheriff's personnel. Additional training regarding the observation and reporting of suspicious behavior should be provided annually. Training would include participation in mock incidents, fire and evacuation drills, lock-down drills, etc.

#### **Comment:**

Training could include lockdown and evacuation procedures. Persons not employed by the Sheriff could receive such training from their employers, based upon procedures and guidelines established and provided by the Sheriff's office to each agency or office head. Suggested training topics for consideration include:

- ✓ New judges and court staff should receive an initial court security orientation briefing that includes such topics as shooter in place and hostage-taking, emergency procedures (e.g., for fire, weather and medical emergencies), building evacuation routes, building emergency color code system, and personal safety procedures for work and home.
- ✓ Judges and court staff should be provided with detailed instructions on reporting threats and incidents received at home or in the court building, courtroom security and protection, and personal safety while at work.
- ✓ A judge and staff security continuing education program established by the Council that deals with workplace violence and personal safety techniques, courtroom security and protection, and personal safety while off-site.
- ✓ Establish ongoing security and safety education programs for judges and court staff that include high-profile trials, home safety techniques, travel safety tips, suspicious packages, bomb and other threats, and emergency evacuation from the court building.
- ✓ Train judges and court staff on self-defense options, threat de-escalation techniques, and personal safety/security considerations during hostage situations.

# Chapter Four

## Staffing

**Principle:** Various elements of courthouse security and incarceration impacting staff levels are subject to rapid and dramatic change. This change may be the result of new policies or problems outside the purview of the Sheriff or of internal concerns including overtime, employee turnover, and leave time. Processes in place estimate necessary staff strength but do not address allocation or use. Each facility's approach to staffing must be based on the design of its physical plant, the security considerations and programs to be addressed, and the current levels of demand for judicial and other governmental services delivered within the courthouse.

### Number of Personnel

**4.01** A sufficient number of personnel shall be employed in each local courthouse or courthouse annex to permit and ensure the implementation and operation of the programs and activities required by these standards.

**Comment:**

As staff is needed and identified in the Court Security Plan, every effort should be made to provide estimates of the cost of court security-related personnel to the governing authority.

### Primary Duty

**4.02** Whenever a courthouse or courthouse annex is open to the public, or whenever there are court proceedings, there shall be at least one (1) trained staff member on duty at all times who shall be immediately available and accessible to courthouse or courthouse annex employees. Such an employee shall not have any other duties which would conflict with the security of the facility.

**Comment:**

The deputy in charge of courthouse security and/or respective team leaders should confirm duty assignments and brief personnel on a daily basis. The deputy in charge of courthouse security should immediately brief all assigned personnel of any changes made to the trial operational plan.

Personnel should remain on duty until properly relieved or instructed to secure their post assignment. Specialized equipment, if any, should be signed out when scheduled shifts commence and signed back in when shift is completed.

Trial personnel should either be on post or in designated areas of the courthouse. All other locations are to be authorized by the deputy in charge of courthouse security prior to any departure.

A daily activity log should be maintained in the command post for the review and recording of trial shift assignments, revisions, modifications, and operational incidents.

### **Staff Requirements for Female Prisoners**

**4.03** Each facility shall have female staff available to perform all sensitive arrest procedures for female prisoners (e.g., searches). When females are present in prisoner holding areas, observation of inmates may be by opposite sex staff as long as opposite sex privacy concerns are given appropriate protection.

**Comment:**

As staff is needed and identified in the Court Security Plan, every effort should be made to provide estimates of the cost of court security-related personnel to the governing authority.

### **Back-Up Staff**

**4.04** A second staff person shall be available to provide assistance when court proceedings are in progress, inmates are present at the courthouse, or there is heavy demand for services at an office located within the courthouse or courthouse annex.

**Comment:**

As staff is needed and identified in the Court Security Plan, every effort should be made to provide estimates of the cost of court security-related personnel to the governing authority.

### **Staffing Plan**

**4.05** In order to determine if there is a sufficient number of personnel for a specific facility, the court security officer in charge shall prepare and retain a staffing plan indicating the personnel assigned to the facility and their duties. Such a staffing plan shall be reviewed by the jurisdiction having fiscal responsibility for the facility. The staffing plan shall reflect projected workloads based upon anticipated court activities.

**Comment:**

As security staff is needed and identified in the Court Security Plan, every effort should be made to provide estimates of the cost of court security-related personnel to the governing authority.

A daily activity log should be maintained by the deputy in charge of courthouse security for the review and recording of trial shift assignments, revisions, modifications, and use of other divisional personnel.

## **Dress**

**4.06** Policy and procedure should provide a dress code for court security personnel. Prescribed dress for civilian bailiffs should be noticeably different from sworn, certified law enforcement personnel but should still present a professional, authoritative appearance.

### **Comment:**

Civilian bailiffs dressed to look like law enforcement personnel could place an unreasonable expectation of law enforcement action upon the bailiffs, placing them in a potentially harmful situation.

# Section Two

## Facility Planning and Architecture

### Chapter Five

#### Planning Facilities

**Principle:** The planning of a facility (new construction or renovation) should be a highly ordered process, and since the facility will remain to serve the community for many years, observing certain guidelines based on the best available experience in court and government facility design and administration will promote substantial economies in construction and operation and provide safety for the public, courthouse employees and officials, security personnel, and inmates. Security and preventing threats and disruption to judicial and government functions should be a priority consideration in planning and designing facilities.

#### Planning and Design Documents

**5.01** Key planning and design documents shall be submitted to the appropriate departments for review and comments at the completion of the following stages:

- Programming plans
- Security risk and/or threat assessments
- Site survey
- Schematic design phase
- Each set of preliminary plans
- Construction documents phase

#### **Comment:**

The planning for new construction or renovation of a facility must take many factors in mind. The obvious are the design and construction plans. However, before those documents are ready, planners should review any available programming plans that note staffing needs, space allocation, adjacencies and other programmatic needs. This will assist for security design of “who’s in the building” in order to take those different needs in to consideration. Additionally, planners should review any available security risk and/or threat assessments. These are documents that note security weaknesses, possible or actual security attacks or threats made in the area, perimeter reviews, tactical scenarios and other similar information that is needed for design and planning. It is also critical to involve all of “right” people in these discussions to ensure that not just site planners and security



staff have a voice but also those who will be tenants in the building as well as those charged with operating and maintaining the facility. Site visits to other courthouses and/or justice facilities should be an integral part of the process.

## **Site Master Plan**

- 5.02** A written master plan examining long-term site utilization shall be prepared. This plan shall locate, in relation to the facility, open space, parking, roadways, and utilities to be incorporated. Long-term development shall address phasing over time.

### **Comment:**

Attention should be given to note the benefits and risks associated with the location of the facility.

## **Staffing Review**

- 5.03** Prior to actual construction, a written security staffing plan shall be prepared and agreed on by the Sheriff, the chief judge of the superior court, and the governing and funding authority.

### **Comment:**

This would be a preliminary staffing assessment based upon desired basic security functions established by the Sheriff and the chief judge of the superior court of the county and estimated projections of courtroom usage. Additional staffing adjustments might be required after court schedules are established once the facility is occupied. This staffing review should also take in to consideration the roles of deputies, bailiffs and other personnel assigned to the courthouse. Of particular note is planning for the number and placement of deputies or other security personnel in courtrooms hearings rooms and other locations.

As staff is needed and identified to support the new or renovated facility, every effort should be made to provide estimates of the cost of court security-related personnel to the governing authority.

## **Space Needs**

- 5.04** Space needs for the Sheriff's office and projected use by the courts and city and county government shall be carefully assessed and described. Space shall be planned to meet all inmate holding, court, program, support, security and administrative needs. Needs shall reflect all standards contained herein.

### **Comment:**

Any space needs assessment should take in to consideration both current and future space needs with projections at least up to, if not beyond, the estimated lifecycle of the facility. Space needs should also take in to consideration if the building is operated 24/7 by security personnel.

## **Supervision Design**

**5.05** The overall facility design shall complement the ability to properly supervise and maintain the security of inmates while allowing for efficient staff utilization within the courthouse.

**Comment:**

None

## **Provision for Space for Public Use**

**5.06** The facility shall provide waiting rooms or lobbies in non-secure areas of the court facility that will be suitable for public use. These shall be located so that facility security is not compromised.

**Comment:**

None

## **Provision for Security Checkpoints**

**5.07** The facility shall have adequate space for placement and operation of a security checkpoint, with appropriate electrical receptacles for supplying power to walk-through magnetometers, X-Ray package screening devices, and, if included in the design, other security measures and equipment requiring electrical power.

**Comment:**

Due to events around the country, planning for the security checkpoint should take several factors in to consideration. These include, but are not limited to:

- Appropriate space for lines or queueing of those coming in to the facility factoring in peak volumes, inclement weather, etc.
- Ballistics or other shielding of areas where security staff are present
- Provision for a gun locker, medical or other similar supplies
- Possible space to add additional screening whether by hand or machine for future growth
- Review of need for limited entry/exit and the pathways needed for such
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations
- Appropriate line of sight or cameras for security personnel
- Assessment of policy on whether to screen employees or if such requirement may happen in the future
- Assessment of levels of screening (visual, machine, pat down, etc.) and possibility of future levels

## **Provision for Funding**

**5.08** Planning for new construction or renovation of facilities should take in to consideration the availability of local funding and the timing of that funding.

### **Comment:**

Funding for such projects is subject to appropriations by the local funding or governing authority. Such efforts should be a partnership between the courts, Sheriff's office and the local governing authority. Each must recognize that funding is limited and that such limitations may necessitate changes in building design and features. However, all involved should work together collaboratively to ensure that minimum security measures are a high priority.

# Chapter Six

## Physical Plant

**Principle:** Although the standards are written to provide guidance to both existing and future facilities, compliance with this chapter can easily be designed into future structures, but often is cost prohibitive when added to existing structures. Existing facilities should balance the desired results with the costs associated with achieving them. It is not the intention of this chapter to require major expenditure to correct minor deviations.

Applying these standards should prompt architectural practices that are practical and responsive to both the constitutional rights afforded inmates, litigants, and those accused of committing a crime, as well as the facility administrator's concern for safety, security and efficiency of the facility.

### DESIGN/FLOW

#### Durability of Construction Materials

**6.01** In all detention areas, walls, floors, and ceilings shall be constructed with materials adequate to attain the degree of security required for each area of the facility.

**Comment:**

A metal or cement material is preferred.

#### Selection of Furnishings

**6.02** Plumbing and electrical fixtures, furnishings, and equipment shall be selected consistent with the security level in which they are to be used.

**Comment:**

Areas designated to hold inmates necessarily require fixtures, furnishings, and equipment designed for high-security areas. Furnishings in certain areas may also have some special requirements such as:

- Bolted, fixed or heavy counsel tables in the courtrooms to prevent them being turned over or used by unruly parties
- Ballistics or similar materials in checkpoint furnishings, judge's bench or other secure areas at Level 3 or better
- Consideration of glass on tables, counters, etc.
- Privacy or modesty screens on counsel tables to hide inmates' legs who may have on restraints
- Consideration of who may be using the furniture such as personnel with large utility or tactical belts and who must get up out of chairs quickly

## Minimum Design Qualifications

**6.03** The facility design shall:

- Promote the orderly flow of facility traffic;
- Provide a secure perimeter;
- Promote staff safety;
- Control access to inmate occupied areas;
- Control access to courthouse employee occupied areas;
- Provide adequate separation;
- Provide maximum observation of inmate occupied areas balancing with privacy considerations;
- Separate offices generating heavy traffic (personnel, licensing, tag office, fines collection, etc.) from courtrooms, courtroom entrances, and chambers areas.
- Ensure that public restrooms are not immediately adjacent to courtrooms or chambers areas.
- Provide maximum observation of witnesses, inmates, parties and others in courtrooms and hearing rooms

**Comment:**

None

## Space Allotment

**6.04** Space allotment shall be such that overcrowding does not occur in the inmate holding area, the main lobby, or lobbies of individual offices.

**Comment:**

None

## Windows

**6.05** The construction or location of windows shall assure security from escape and prevent unauthorized entry from the outside.

**Comment:**

None

## **Entrance Access**

- 6.06** The use of stairs should be avoided at the entrance to the inmate holding area or in pathways of inmate movement between the holding cell and the courtrooms; as alternatives, ramps or elevators should be constructed for means of access and egress. Public and staff entrances and pathways of movement should meet requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Comment:**

None

## **Location of Staff Posts**

- 6.07** Staff work stations and control rooms shall be situated to provide the greatest possible degree of observation of public traffic flow and inmate movement.

**Comment:**

None

## **Staff Assistance**

- 6.08** The inmate holding facility shall be designed and/or equipped in such a manner that staff and inmates have the ability to summon immediate assistance in the event of an incident or emergency.

**Comment:**

None

## **Classification Separation**

- 6.09** The inmate holding facilities shall be designed and constructed of sufficient capacity to ensure that inmates can be separated according to gender, and with consideration for in-custody defendants that must be kept separate from each other. Additionally, juveniles must be kept separate from adults.

**Comment:**

Separation of inmates by classification is a critical concern and not one that can be solved just by policy and staffing alone.

## **Secure Prisoner Entrance**

- 6.10** There should be a secure area (vehicle sally port) for loading/unloading prisoners from transport vehicles. It is recommended that the overhead clearance should be sufficient to allow taller vehicles, such as vans, ambulances, or buses access, and the length and width of the sally port should also be sufficient to allow multiple vehicles and/or buses to fit within its confines and allow swift entry and exit.

**Comment:**

Ideally, this area is not accessible or visible to the public, provides a protected environment for inmates and security personnel, and assures prevention of escapes.

**General Inmate Holding Requirements**

- 6.11** Inmate holding areas shall be designed to provide adequate confinement, reasonable privacy, sight and sound surveillance, and protection for inmates, the public, and staff.

**Comment:**

Particular attention should be given to allow for line-of-sight surveillance in addition to camera surveillance. Included in this review is whether adequate space is available attorneys to meet with their client in a holding cell or if another secure area has been designated for such use. *See also 6.17.*

**Security Screening at Building Access Points**

- 6.12** Sufficient space should be allocated for placing scanning equipment so as to maximize flow and security effectiveness, while preventing crowding or causing the public to endure inclement weather while waiting to enter the building.

**Comment:**

The size of the screening area accommodations should be established based on average peak usage.

**SECURITY CONDITIONS**

**Security Perimeter**

- 6.13** All facilities shall establish a security perimeter to the maximum extent the design permits. The perimeter shall provide that inmates remain within the perimeter and public access shall be prevented without the appropriate authorization.

**Comment:**

Design of the perimeter should prevent the possibility of intentional or accidental intrusion of the building by motor vehicle.

There should also be an interior perimeter with secure areas for judges and other designated personnel to move about through secure (inaccessible to the public) hallways or corridors.

## **Inmate Entrance to Facility**

**6.14** Separate entrances shall be maintained to separate inmate flow from the general public access. Inmates should have pathways of movement separate from judges and other courthouse employees, as well as the general public.

**Comment:**

There should be hallways and elevators (if applicable) dedicated only to inmate movement. Inmates should never be escorted through public hallways or elevators, and should not use hallways and elevators used by judges or other courthouse officials and employees.

## **Inmate Entrance to Courtrooms**

**6.15** Inmate access to courtrooms is separate from any other entrance to the courtroom. Inmates enter the courtroom directly from a holding cell area or through restricted corridors connected to the holding cell area. Elevators used for inmate movement are equipped to restrict use to authorized persons only and provide for video surveillance and communication capability in cases of emergency.

**Comment:**

The inmate entrance shall be sufficiently distant from the public gallery of the courtroom to prevent assault against inmates or the passage of contraband.

## **Sally Ports (Vehicular or Pedestrian)**

**6.16** The requirements of a sally port shall be:

- Electronically operated from control
- Interlocked;
- Equipped with a manual override;
- Visual/audio monitored; and
- In line of sight from control.

Security shall be maintained when the sally port is compromised.

**Comment:**

None



## **Attorney/Inmate Conferences**

- 6.17** Space for attorney/inmate conferences should be provided within the secure inmate holding area. The space should accommodate confidentiality of communications while allowing security staff the ability to maintain visual observation for attorney safety.

**Comment:**

None

## **Judge's Entrance to Courtroom**

- 6.18** Judge's access to courtrooms should be separate from any other entrance to the courtroom. Judges enter the courtroom directly from chambers or through restricted, private corridors connected to the chambers.

**Comment:**

None

## **Access to Judge's Chambers**

- 6.19** Access points to the judge's chambers should be minimal.

**Comment:**

Ideally, there should be no more than two (2) entrances to the judge's chamber; one from the bench and one from the judge's secretary's office or other type of non-public access.

## **Restricted Public Access**

- 6.20** Facility design allows for courthouse staff to allow or deny public access to all offices, specifically including the offices or chambers of judges, offices of prosecutors, public defenders, and clerks of the various courts.

**Comment:**

None

## **Restricted Elevators and Hallways**

- 6.21** There are hallways and elevators restricted for use only by judges, other officials, and courthouse employees.

**Comment:**

These restricted elevators should be equipped to restrict use to authorized persons only and provide for video surveillance and communication capability in cases of emergency.

## **Facility Protection Alarm System**

**6.22** The courthouse or courthouse annex is equipped with an alarm system that is monitored twenty-four (24) hours per day, capable of indicating the presence of fire/smoke, or after-hours unauthorized entry to the building.

**Comment:**

None

## **Fire Protection**

**6.23** The facility is equipped throughout with a sprinkler system, fire alarm pull-stations, fire evacuation diagrams, and fire extinguishers as required by local fire marshal inspection.

**Comment:**

This requirement specifically includes inmate holding areas.

## **Courtroom Lighting Controls**

**6.24** Controls for courtroom lighting are designed and located to prevent use by unauthorized persons.

**Comment:**

None

## **Emergency Lighting**

**6.25** The facility is equipped with emergency lighting throughout the entire building.

**Comment:**

Emergency lighting should clearly direct those in the building to emergency exits.

## **Auxiliary Power Source**

**6.26** An auxiliary power source is available to allow courtroom and holding cell surveillance, operation of elevators, and lighting sufficient to facilitate safe movement of people during a power outage. The auxiliary power source is tested regularly to ensure proper function when needed.

**Comment:**

As a best practice, auxiliary power sources should also include security system components such as cameras, holding cells, recording devices, radios, and the like. The auxiliary power source should also be in a secure area to prevent disruption and damage.

## **Interior Wall Design**

- 6.27** All interior walls extend from the floor all the way to the slab of the next level (or roof). The use of drop ceilings is discouraged, unless there is insufficient room above the ceiling to conceal persons or objects.

**Comment:**

This prevents the possibility of someone from climbing over walls above the ceiling level to access offices or avenues of escape.

## **Vaults**

- 6.28** Vaults used for keeping money, evidence, or records are made of sufficiently rated materials capable of protecting the contents from fire and unauthorized intrusion. The vaults should also have alarms in the event of intrusion and fire/smoke, and locking mechanisms that would prevent staff from being locked in.

**Comment:**

Best practices also include video surveillance of those entering/exiting a secured vault.

## **Locks on Interior Doors**

- 6.29** Doors for all offices, publicly accessible storage rooms, utility rooms, and janitor's closets should be equipped with cylinder locks.

**Comment:**

Doors with windows should be equipped with double-cylinder locks. This helps to prevent the door from opened from the inside after the window is broken.

## **Jury Deliberation Rooms**

- 6.30** Jury deliberation rooms are directly accessible from the courtroom, or by a protected, restricted hallway directly connected to the courtroom.

**Comment:**

Jury deliberation rooms should also have access to a restroom and water fountain.

## **Witness and Attorney-Client Rooms**

- 6.31** The facility design includes witness waiting rooms and attorney-client consultation rooms with separate rooms for opposing witnesses. Such rooms should be restricted from public access and each with access to private toilet and water fountain facilities.

**Comment:**

None

**Service Access and Security**

- 6.32** The design of the facility shall allow for service deliveries to be made without compromising the security of the facility.

**Comment:**

None

**Control Room**

- 6.33** An adequate control room shall be secure from unauthorized access and shall be capable of controlling general public access to the facility. The control room shall have immediate access to a sink and toilet.

**Comment:**

None

**Surveillance by Audio/Visual Equipment**

- 6.34** Where video surveillance technology is used, it shall primarily monitor hallways, elevators, corridors, parking lots, or points on the security perimeter. Cameras shall not be used to invade an inmate's personal privacy.

**Comment:**

Particular attention should be paid to the invasiveness of the cameras as well as what "blind" spots occur. In addition, protocols should cover what is recorded and what is not (such as jury boxes, jury deliberation, etc.)

**Monitor(s) Location**

- 6.35** Sight and sound surveillance equipment, when used, shall be monitored in the control room.

**Comment:**

For some facilities due to staffing considerations or for after-hours, the option for remote viewing of monitors should be available.

**Floor Drains/Maintenance**

- 6.36** All inmate holding area floors shall be of a smooth, easily cleanable non-absorbent material. Floor drains shall be constructed to serve all cells and other areas where necessary to facilitate cleaning. Floor drains shall be located outside the cell space to reduce the incidence of tampering and

flooding. Plumbing connections shall be secure from uncontrolled access by inmates.

**Comment:**

None

**Emergency Water Shut-off**

**6.37** Emergency water shut-off valves shall be constructed for each cell. These valves should be accessible to security personnel without having to enter the cell.

**Comment:**

None

**Provision of Inmate Holding Cell**

**6.38** A holding cell shall be provided for the purpose of detaining inmates or arrestees awaiting court or transport to the jail. This arrangement shall not exceed a period of eight hours. This cell should be equipped with permanently attached seating to accommodate the rated capacity (10 square feet per person). Drinking water and toilet facilities shall be available.

**Comment:**

This provision can be met by having drinking water and toilet facilities located outside the cell area but readily available to detainees upon request.

## Chapter Seven

### Building Exterior, Grounds, and Landscaping

**Principal:** Successful security plans and operations begin outside of the structures protected by the plan. Target-hardening includes the capability of preventing threats from getting too close to the building, and providing a safe environment around the building. Security and lighting of parking areas and walkways, and basic security measures such as locks on windows and doors are essential to a successful security plan.

#### Restricted Parking for Judges

**7.01** There should be restricted parking for judges. There are no signs indicating names of any official or those who are authorized to park in the area. The parking area is under constant surveillance by security personnel. Access to the court building is available directly from the reserved parking area. The parking area should be frequently patrolled by security personnel.

#### **Comment:**

Parking areas for judges should not be visible or accessible to the public. Access to the reserved parking area should be controlled such that no unauthorized vehicle can enter, nor can any pedestrian. Access to the building from the parking lot should not be accessible to anyone else.

#### Restricted Parking for Other Employees

**7.02** Reserved parking is available for other courthouse employees. There are no signs indicating name or title of any official authorized to park in the area. The parking area is under constant surveillance and frequently patrolled by security personnel.

#### **Comment:**

Access to the reserved parking area should be controlled, at a minimum, such that unauthorized vehicles are easily identified. The use of parking permits or proximity-card-controlled gates could prove useful in this regard. Protective fencing around the parking area would enhance staff safety. The presence of security personnel during times of heavy employee arrival/departure is recommended.

#### Exterior Doors

**7.03** Exterior doors, especially those with glass, should be equipped with locking mechanisms that require use of a key or other controlled means of unlocking the door from either side. The hinge pins on exterior doors should be located on the inside of the door, or a hinge designed for security purposes preventing removal from the outside.

**Comment:**

Suggested types of locking mechanisms include:

- Traditional key lock with reinforced door frame and dead bolt lock
- Electronic card entry system
- Fingerprint scanning system

**Windows**

**7.04** Exterior windows should be of a design to prevent unauthorized entry/exit from the building or unauthorized opening/closing. If windows are designed to open, locking mechanisms built-in to the window by the manufacturer are recommended. These could be bolstered by additional measures.

**Comment:**

Windows easily accessible from ground level ideally should not open at all. Windows that open should be protected by metal bars or mesh and locking devices. Polycarbonate glazing or similar material can be used to deter from the window being broken. Windows on courtrooms and other high-risk areas should be reinforced with fabrics, glazing or other material to limit the risks incurred by explosion, shattering or other intrusion.

**Exterior Building Illumination**

**7.05** The entire perimeter of the building, particularly entry points, should be sufficiently illuminated to discourage/detect unlawful entry attempts. The lights should remain on from sunset to sunrise. Access to controls for exterior lighting should be restricted to authorized persons only.

**Comment:**

None

**Illumination of Grounds**

**7.06** Lighting of the grounds surrounding the courthouse should be sufficient to provide visibility of surroundings for persons walking across the grounds.

**Comment:**

None

**Illumination of Parking Areas**

**7.07** Parking lots, parking decks, and walkways between parking areas should be sufficiently illuminated to discourage assaults of persons or damage/entry to vehicles.

**Comment:**

None

**Exterior Lighting, Control, and Power Outages**

- 7.08** Minimal exterior lighting powered by an auxiliary power source should be available for the building, grounds, walkways, and parking areas in the event of a power outage. Exterior lighting should be protected against unauthorized control.

**Comment:**

None

**Shrubs and Bushes**

- 7.09** Shrubs and bushes, particularly those next to the building, should not provide a place of concealment for persons, weapons, explosives, or contraband for inmates. Additionally, view from the street of windows and doors should not be obscured. Other areas of shrubs or bushes (such as along or near walkways or parking areas) should not provide a place of concealment for persons wishing to assault people moving across or around the grounds.

**Comment:**

Detection of persons attempting after-hours entry to the building through windows or doors should be easily viewed by passing vehicular or pedestrian traffic.

**Upper Story or Roof Access**

- 7.10** Trees and poles next to courthouses or courthouse annexes should not afford access to upper story windows or the roof.

**Comment:**

None

**Traffic Flow**

- 7.11** Landscaping and architecture should be used to naturally direct courthouse visitors to the public entrance and away from restricted or closed access points.

**Comment:**

None



## **Vehicle Parking Proximity**

**7.12** The proximity of parked vehicles to the courthouse or courthouse annex should be sufficient to minimize damage caused by vehicle mounted explosive devices.

**Comment:**

None

## **Exterior Repairs**

**7.13** The exterior of the building and grounds should be maintained to prevent the availability of loose stones or pipes as weapons. Repair or maintenance debris should be removed immediately.

**Comment:**

None

## **Video Surveillance**

**7.14** The entire exterior, grounds, and all parking areas of courthouses and courthouse annexes should be under continuous, recorded video surveillance.

**Comment:**

None

# Section Three

## Operations and Services

### Chapter Eight

#### Access Control

**Principle:** Court proceedings take place at different intervals based on the schedule of the individual court and judge. By law, court proceedings are generally open to the public. In some jurisdictions, government offices other than judicial functions are located within court buildings. Some courthouses have permanent, fixed security checkpoints located at all entrances into the building which operate during business hours. At a minimum, checkpoints should be located in an appropriate area at the entrance(s) to the courthouse. Discretion is allowed for the use of separate public, judicial, and employee entrances. Security personnel should be alerted when use of restricted access points occurs.

#### Building Entrances

**8.01** Public entrances to courthouses and courthouse annexes should be limited to the absolute minimum. All other entrances to the building are considered restricted and should be locked to prevent public use.

**Comment:**

None

#### Restricted Entrances

**8.02** If policy and procedure allows courthouse employees, judges, or other officials to be exempted from using a public access entrance, such entrances should be physically separated from public entrances, and not easily viewed by the public. Ideally, such entrances should be easily accessible from reserved parking areas and not easily approached by the public.

**Comment:**

None

#### Control of Restricted Entrances

**8.03** Access into the courthouse or courthouse annex through restricted entrances for use by designated personnel only, such as employees, judges, or other officials is strictly controlled. Unauthorized entry or exit through a restricted access point should activate an alarm, alerting security personnel. Restricted entrances should be under visual surveillance by security personnel. Restricted access points should remain locked with security mechanisms that do not allow unauthorized persons ingress/egress.

**Comment:**

Control of ingress/egress could be accomplished through traditional lock and key, proximity card readers, or more sophisticated measures such as fingerprint scanners. The use of keypads and PIN numbers is discouraged.

**Access through Windows**

- 8.04** Policy and procedure provide that periodic checks of ground-floor windows are performed during courthouse or courthouse annex business hours to ensure they are locked and protected against unauthorized access.

**Comment:**

“Access” includes the ability to pass weapons and other prohibited items into the building through an open window.

**Video Surveillance of Entry Points**

- 8.05** All points of entry should be under continuously recorded video surveillance. Monitors and recording equipment should be in the court security control station, accessible only to court security personnel.

**Comment:**

None

**Security Checkpoints**

- 8.06** Policy and procedure provide that all members of the general public must pass through a security screening checkpoint before they are allowed access to any office, courtroom, or any area, including restrooms, beyond the screening station. The security checkpoint should be operated during courthouse or courthouse annex business hours at a minimum.

**Comment:**

The checkpoint should be operated early enough to allow persons required to attend a court proceeding ample time to clear the screening process and be in the courtroom on time.

**Location of Security Checkpoints**

- 8.07** Policy and procedure provide that security checkpoints are located at all public entrances, in a place that prohibits public access to any office, courtroom, waiting room, restroom, or any other area of the courthouse or courthouse annex without passing through the checkpoint. Design and location of the checkpoint should allow court security officers the ability to detect and stop attempts to bypass the screening process. Additionally, the checkpoint should be placed in a location that allows access by disabled persons and keeps people from waiting outside in inclement weather while waiting to pass through the checkpoint.

**Comment:**

None

**Security Checkpoint Operation**

**8.08** Policy and procedure provide a method for court security officers to ensure that weapons and other prohibited items are not introduced into the courthouse. This would include searches of persons, their affects, and packages.

**Comment:**

None

**Equipment Used at Checkpoints**

**8.09** Security equipment used at checkpoints should be as minimally invasive as is necessary to check persons and their carry-in items such as purses, briefcases, etc. for weapons and other prohibited items.

**Comment:**

The security checkpoints may have a variety of screening equipment which should include but are not limited to:

- X-ray equipment;
- Magnetometers (large, fixed detection equipment and/or hand-held wands); and/or
- The visual inspection of hand bags, purses, brief cases or any other type of item brought into the courthouse.

The electronic or visual inspection of packages (U.S. Postal, UPS, Fed-Ex, etc.) is recommended. These items should be scheduled at certain times of the day.

**Roof Access**

**8.10** Policy and procedure provide that access to the roof from inside the courthouse or courthouse annex is strictly controlled. Access to the roof by private contractors should be coordinated by security or maintenance personnel. Private contractors should be supervised by courthouse security or maintenance personnel while working on the roof. Access to the roof should remain locked from the inside until necessary for authorized access. Where roof access is possible from the outside, the doors to the roof should be equipped with an intrusion alarm for after-hours monitoring.

**Comment:**

A log recording the date, time, purpose, and the names of county personnel and private contractors accessing the roof should be maintained.

**Skylights**

- 8.11** Skylights should be securely fastened or installed as permanently closed. If the skylight can be opened, it should be equipped with an intrusion alarm for after-hours monitoring.

**Comment:**

None

**Emergency Exits**

- 8.12** Doors associated with external fire escapes should be kept secured with quality locks to prevent unauthorized entry from the outside. When opened from the inside, an alarm should alert security personnel. All emergency exit doors should be similarly equipped to prevent unauthorized entry and alert security personnel whenever the door is opened from the inside. All emergency exits should be equipped with video surveillance equipment with the ability to record unauthorized entry/exit.

**Comment:**

Motion sensors that trigger video surveillance recording and alert control room staff prior to an emergency exit door being opened could prove helpful.

**Other Exterior Doors**

- 8.13** All other exterior doors (basements, boiler rooms, machine rooms, etc.) should be equipped with quality security locks. These doors should always be kept locked, and access to these areas controlled by security or maintenance personnel. The doors should be equipped with alarms to alert security staff of entry during courthouse business hours or after-hours entry.

**Comment:**

None

**Key Control**

- 8.14** Means of access (keys, proximity cards, etc.) should be strictly controlled by the Sheriff's office. There should be an exact accounting of all keys and access control cards, including parking access cards. Employees separating from employment, or other persons with authorized means of access, must surrender keys or access cards upon demand.

**Comment:**

Judges, other elected courthouse officials, and the county governing authority can submit written authorization of access for employees to the Sheriff for appropriate keys or access cards. Any person receiving a key or access card should sign for receipt. Protocols should be in place to quickly address lost, stolen and non-functional keys and access cards.

**Employee Identification**

- 8.15** All courthouse employees, judges, and officials should wear some type of identification for easy recognition by security staff. Issuance of such identification should be controlled by the Sheriff's office or designee, with the same care as key control.

**Comment:**

This requirement is not as important for smaller facilities with very few employees where security staff is familiar with all courthouse personnel.

**Crawlspace**

- 8.16** Crawlspace should be protected from unauthorized intrusion. Openings between crawlspace and basements should be sealed to prevent entry to the building through the crawlspace.

**Comment:**

Openings in crawlspace provide a place to conceal contraband for inmate workers, explosive devices, or items that are meant to look like potential explosive devices.

**Security Presence**

- 8.17** Access to the building should be controlled by courthouse security personnel during business hours and after-hours. Security personnel should remain in the courthouse until the last employee has left.

**Comment:**

This includes after-hours.

**Intrusion Alarm System**

- 8.18** An alarm system is necessary to provide additional security against unauthorized, after-hours intrusion. Courthouses contain vital records and sometimes evidence in criminal trials and should be protected by an alarm system.

**Comment:**

Compliance with this standard becomes problematic when security personnel are not the last to leave. Providing an alarm code to every employee creates its own problems. Additionally, people mistakenly believing they are the last to leave might set the alarm while other employees are still inside working.

**After-Hours Access**

- 8.19** After-hours access to court facilities should be controlled by the Sheriff. It is recommended that court security personnel be present at the courthouse whenever it is occupied. Authorized personnel needing after-hours access should arrange access through the Sheriff's office. Sheriff's personnel should be notified when after-hours access is no longer required to ensure the building is properly re-secured.

**Comment:**

This allows for maximum security of the building and enhanced safety of court personnel working after-hours.

# Chapter Nine

## Perimeter Security

**Principle:** Courthouse security procedures begin outside of the courthouse. Early intervention makes the prevention of introduction of weapons and other undesirable items in the courthouse easier. Moreover, a strong perimeter security program creates a safer environment not just within the courthouse itself, but for the people around the courthouse and on its grounds. No detail of perimeter security is mundane. All aspects of the environment around the building must be considered to harden the courthouse as a target of violence. The idea is to simultaneously reduce opportunities to commit violent acts and allow for swift response to minimize the risk of injury to personnel and damage to the building in the event of an act of violence.

### Physical Security Barriers

- 9.01** The building should be protected by placing some type of physical barrier at regular intervals around the perimeter of the building or at least around the exterior of the building near where the courtroom(s) are located.

**Comment:**

Examples include bollards, large planters and the like. Alternatively, when designing new facilities, appropriate set backs from streets, closing off or limiting traffic on adjacent streets or other areas can be included in the design such as through green space or other Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) efforts.

### Presence of Signs Advising of Security Checkpoint

- 9.02** Policy and procedure should provide that signs advising all courthouse and courthouse annex visitors they must submit to a security screening before being allowed access to the building should be posted prominently at the entrance to the building and in parking areas.

**Comment:**

Signs posted in the parking areas should advise visitors to leave prohibited items secured in their vehicle. Additional signs posted along walkways to the courthouse entrance would be helpful to those arriving by public transportation.

### Presence of Signs Listing Prohibited Items

- 9.03** Along with the signs identified in 9.02, courthouse and courthouse annex policy and procedure provide that signs should be prominently posted that identify for visitors the items not allowed in the courthouse. Notification prior to reaching the building entrance is necessary to prevent visitors from dumping prohibited items in trashcans and shrubbery located near the entrance.



**Comment:**

Signs posted as close as possible to public parking would prove most helpful.

**List of Prohibited Items**

**9.04** The Sheriff and chief judge of the superior court of the county should create a list of items that are absolutely prohibited from being allowed into the courthouse. The list should be publicly displayed.

**Comment:**

Limit the number and types of items allowed into the courthouse/courtroom.

Such prohibited items may include:

- Food or drink;
- Cell phones and beepers;
- Electronics (headphones, radios, lap top computers, tape recorders, etc.);
- Cameras;
- Weapons (guns, knives, pepper spray, etc.); and/or
- Reading material such as magazines and newspapers.

**Confiscation of Prohibited Items**

**9.05** Policy and procedure provide that security personnel will not be responsible for storing prohibited items on behalf of the owner. When carrying the prohibited item into the courthouse constitutes a criminal violation, the item will be seized, held, and processed as evidence in the event of arrest.

**Comment:**

Courthouse visitors can return prohibited items to their vehicle for safe-keeping. Some locations may provide weapon lockers for law enforcement.

**Authorization of Weapons Beyond Checkpoint(s)**

**9.06** Policy and procedure should establish who has the authority to carry weapons beyond security checkpoints. Judges, district attorneys, and court security personnel should automatically be included. Peace officers who are litigants or interested parties to a legal proceeding (other than as a witness for the State in a criminal prosecution) should not be allowed to carry any type of weapon beyond the security checkpoint.

**Comment:**

See also O.C.G.A. §§ 16-11-127 and 16-11-130. The list of who is authorized to bring weapons into the courthouse demands careful consideration. Certainly, only sworn, certified peace officers should be considered in addition to the people identified in the standard.

**Storage of Peace Officers' Weapons**

- 9.07** Policy and procedure should provide for the safe and secure storage of a weapon belonging to a certified peace officer if the officer is not allowed to carry the weapon beyond the checkpoint.

**Comment:**

None

**Trash Receptacles**

- 9.08** Policy and procedure should provide that trash receptacles, such as trash cans, dumpsters, cigarette butt receptacles with integrated trash containers, etc., should not be placed next to or near the building. The building should be shielded from explosive devices left in such trash receptacles.

**Comment:**

None

**No Parking Zones**

- 9.09** Policy and procedure should provide that no-parking zones on courthouse grounds or around the courthouse be enforced.

**Comment:**

None

**Abandoned Vehicles**

- 9.10** Policy and procedure should establish guidelines for the removal of abandoned vehicles deemed to be a potential threat to the courthouse or courthouse annex.

**Comment:**

None

## Security Patrols

**9.11** Policy and procedure provide for visible and conspicuous security patrols of the courthouse and courthouse annex exterior, grounds, walkways, and parking areas during the hours the building is open.

**Comment:**

None

## Security Sweeps

**9.12** Policy and procedure should provide that detailed security sweeps of the grounds and exterior of the courthouse and courthouse annex should occur at the start of business each day.

**Comment:**

On a daily basis and at the close of all business in the courthouse or annex, there should be security inspections of the exterior of the courthouse.

Security personnel should visually check all:

- Parking lots;
- Landscaping;
- Trash containers;
- Cigarette containers;
- Drainage pipes; and
- Any area where a person or object could be concealed.

The search should be for narcotics, weapons, or other items which seem to be out of place. The inspection needs to be an exhaustive visual inspection and, if available, a canine should be used to detect for additional items as well.

## Escorts

**9.13** Policy and procedure should provide for the request of escort between the courthouse or courthouse annex and transportation and parking lot or place to embark/disembark public transportation. Security personnel should provide escorts when requested.

**Comment:**

Requests might come from judges, prosecutors, witnesses, recipients of family violence protective orders, jurors, etc.

# Chapter Ten

## Interior Security

**Principle:** Judicial proceedings and related activities, as well as other government business are transacted within courthouses and court annexes. A self-governing society requires participation from its citizens to sustain itself, and everyone should feel they have access to their government. Moreover, protection is the primary purpose of government, and people seek protection of their rights and safety (in many cases) from the courts. Anything that threatens the effectiveness of the judicial process tears at the very fabric of governmental purpose and function. Preserving order within the courthouse maintains faith in the judicial process and promotes order in the community.

### Tenant Directories

**10.01** Tenant directories should be prominently posted on each level of the facility to aid visitors with locating the office or courtroom they are seeking. This helps maintain flow of movement within the facility and reduces anxiety or frustration of those needing judicial or governmental assistance.

**Comment:**

None

### Security Sweeps

**10.2** Policy and procedure provide that courthouse security staff will perform security sweeps of the interior of the courthouse or courthouse annex every day before it opens, and again after securing the building at the end of the day.

**Comment:**

The morning security sweep should be accomplished prior to allowing anyone, including employees, into the courthouse to ensure there is no one waiting to cause harm and that there are no weapons or suspected explosive devices present. Additionally, signs of any overnight thefts or break-ins will be undisturbed.

The evening security sweep ensures no unauthorized persons are concealed or lurking within the buildings and that all exterior doors are locked.

### Interior Patrols

**10.03** Policy and procedure should provide that the interior of the courthouse is patrolled by security personnel throughout the day. All areas of the building interior should be checked, including stairwells, restrooms, corridors, and offices. Trash receptacles should be checked for weapons and other suspicious items during these patrols. Frequency of patrols depends upon the volume of activity and visitors.

**Comment:**

None

**Utility Rooms/Janitor Closets**

- 10.04** All utility rooms, storage rooms, janitor closets, etc. should remain locked at all times unless actively in use. Policy and procedure should provide that security staff check these areas to ensure they are secure.

**Comment:**

These types of areas provide places of concealment for persons or items that may pose a threat to security.

**Video Surveillance**

- 10.05** Policy and procedure provide that all hallways, corridors, stairwells, entrances to judges' chambers, and offices are monitored through continuously recorded video surveillance. Places where courthouse employees collect funds from the public and places such as the deed room should be among the locations under video surveillance.

**Comment:**

Private offices do not need to be under video surveillance, but any area where there is frequent interaction between the public and courthouse employees should be monitored.

**Collection of Funds**

- 10.06** Policy and procedure should provide that places or offices within the courthouse or courthouse annex where county employees collect or receive funds in the form of fees, fines, or taxes should be equipped with locking cash drawers or boxes that are kept closed and locked except when in use. It is recommended that these receptacles are out of sight of the public.

**Comment:**

None

**Storage of Collected Funds**

- 10.07** Policy and procedure provide that offices within the courthouse or courthouse annex responsible for collecting and accounting for funds keep a minimum amount of money in the building overnight. Funds kept in the building should be maintained in a vault or other secure location that is only accessible to a few, select employees.

**Comment:**

Vaults should have only one access point from the interior of the building. In older courthouses, vaults might have an exterior window. The windows should be shuttered from the inside sufficiently to withstand forced entry attempts from the outside. Vaults in which employees could be involuntarily locked should be equipped with a duress alarm or other way of summoning assistance.

**Bank Deposits**

- 10.08** Policy and procedure provide that bank deposits should be prepared in a secure area, not visible to the public. Deposits should be delivered to the bank on an irregular schedule and transported in a discrete, secure manner. Escort by armed security personnel is recommended.

**Comment:**

None

**Duress Alarm Placement**

- 10.09** Policy and procedure provide that duress alarms will be placed in all offices and locations within the courthouse or courthouse annex where funds are collected. Additionally, duress alarms should be located in every office where courthouse employees and officials interact with criminal offenders, traffic violators, and persons with diminished mental capacity. Offices where disputes between the public and county employees might arise should be similarly equipped. This necessarily includes a judge's chambers and his or her secretary's office.

**Comment:**

Duress alarms should be properly linked to the overall security system, cameras, radio system, etc. This may include triggering automated recording of cameras in the vicinity or retention of recordings. Consideration should also be given to using pendant or wireless duress alarms when at-risk staff are mobile in the facility or if a permanent duress alarm is not practical or feasible.

**Duress Alarm and Emergency Light Testing**

- 10.10** Policy and procedure provide that Sheriff's personnel will periodically test each duress alarm and emergency light within the courthouse or courthouse annex to ensure proper functionality. Duress alarms should announce at the court security control room or other location where the alarm will be immediately acknowledged. A record of such tests should be maintained.

**Comment:**

None

## **Secure Offices**

- 10.11** Policy and procedure should provide that offices with frequent interface with the public have a counter or 'teller window' that separates employees from the public. Policy and procedure should provide that judges' secretaries are able to screen visitors to judges' offices and restrict access only to individuals not deemed a threat to the judge.

**Comment:**

This not only protects employees from assault but discourages attempts to rob offices where funds are collected or stored.

## **Secure Passageways**

- 10.12** Policy and procedure should provide that certain hallways, corridors, and elevators are for use by county employees and court officials only. These passageways should be physically separated from passageways used by the public. Doors leading to secure passageways from public access areas should remain securely locked. Access through such doorways should be strictly monitored and require use of a key or access card. Elevators reserved for restricted use should require use of an access card.

**Comment:**

Best practices now require secure pathways for judges and inmates. Attention should also be paid to when secure passageways are opened to the public as part of an emergency egress protocol.

## **Witness Waiting Rooms**

- 10.13** Policy and procedures should provide for waiting rooms for witnesses. Moreover, there should be separate waiting areas for prosecution and defense witnesses, or witnesses for each side of civil litigation.

**Comment:**

None

## **Access to Witness Rooms**

- 10.14** Policy and procedures should provide that public access to witness waiting rooms be restricted during use. Access to witness waiting rooms should be controlled by court officials or security personnel.

**Comment:**

None

## **Communications System**

- 10.15** Policy and procedure should provide for a means of communication among court security personnel to facilitate the rapid, confidential exchange of information or directives. Additionally, there should be a method for rapid exchange of important information or instructions between security staff, courthouse/annex employees and officials, and visitors.

**Comment:**

This may be accomplished through a secured internal network or communications system. For communicating to the public and all building staff, a public address or similar system should be in place.

## **Paints and Flammables**

- 10.16** Policy and procedure should provide that paints and other flammable liquids, if kept in the courthouse or courthouse annex, are stored in secure, flame and heat resistant locations that are not accessible by the public.

**Comment:**

None

## **Weapons**

- 10.17** Policy and procedures should provide that weapons or arsenals maintained by security personnel at the courthouse or courthouse annex are stored in high-security areas and not accessible to anyone but authorized personnel.

**Comment:**

None

## **Periodic Facility Inspection**

- 10.18** Policy and procedures should provide that a periodic inspection of the courthouse and courthouse annex(es) be performed to identify deficiencies that jeopardize the safety or security of occupants and that there be a procedure for correcting the deficiencies. The inspection should include evaluation of how closely staff follows operational policies and procedures.

**Comment:**

Examples include: fire or tripping hazards, leaky ceilings, security lapses, complacency, etc.

## **Escort of Judges**

- 10.19** Policy and procedure should provide that whenever a judge must travel through publicly accessible areas of the courthouse, courthouse annex, or grounds, security personnel provide escort for the judge. It is



recommended that judges use private, secure elevators if travel between floor levels is required.

**Comment:**

Escort to the judge's vehicle would be required unless judges have secure parking not accessible by the public.

# Chapter Eleven

## Courtroom Security

**Principle:** Courtrooms are the most visible venue for the delivery of justice system services. People's fates, fortunes, and liberties are determined in courtrooms on a regular basis. Some of the legal problems resolved in courtrooms are fairly simple, while others are highly complex. In all cases, the issues and problems examined and resolved in the courtroom are extremely important to the participants and parties bringing action before the court. A civilized, respected, and binding resolution between aggrieved parties is part of our system of governance. Courts must function without distraction and without fear of violent intervention to maintain faith in impartial decision-making and redress of wrong-doing.

### Access to Courtroom When Court Not in Session

**11.01** Policy and procedure provide that all doors to the courtroom will be securely locked when the courtroom is not in use. Courtrooms are used only for official purposes, and only persons authorized by court officials or security personnel are allowed access to the courtroom when there are no official, public activities occurring therein.

**Comment:**

None

### Public Entrance to Courtroom

**11.02** Policy and procedure provide an entrance for the public to use when entering the courtroom that is separate from entrances used by inmates or judges.

**Comment:**

None

### Courtroom Windows

**11.03** Policy and procedure provide that courtroom windows are covered with drapes, blinds, or similar mechanism to prevent view from the outside.

**Comment:**

None

### Emergency Exits from Courtroom

**11.04** Policy and procedure should provide that emergency exits from the courtroom will allow exit from the courtroom whenever it is in use. It is recommended that emergency exits should not open to hallways or areas that are restricted from public access, such as judge's chambers or offices.

**Comment:**

None

**Security Sweeps of Courtroom**

**11.05** Policy and procedure provide that prior to any court proceeding, security personnel will perform a visual inspection of the courtroom to search for weapons, contraband, or any other item prohibited from the courtroom or otherwise deemed a threat to safety, security, and good order of the judicial process. Another such sweep will occur at the conclusion of courtroom usage each day.

**Comment:**

Best practices for security sweeps of the courtroom include:

- Visually inspect the entire area where spectator seating is authorized. This will include visually inspecting around, and under all seats, tables or other items located in this area.
- Visually inspect in and around the prosecutor's tables and chairs.
- Visually inspect in and around the defendant's table and chairs.
- Visually inspect in and around the jury box seating and jury rooms.
- Visually inspect in and around the clerk/court reporter's positions.
- Visually inspect in and around the judge's bench and chair.
- Visually inspect in and around the witness(s) stand and chair.
- Visually inspect in and around all trash receptacles, desks and other furniture and equipment.
- Visually inspect all additional spaces which are not mentioned above but which are applicable to your facility.

**Potential Threat Areas**

**11.06** Security personnel should identify and frequently check areas above, below, and adjacent to the courtroom where potential threats could be concealed.

**Comment:**

None

## **Security Sweep Proficiency Tests**

- 11.07** Policy and procedure should provide that security supervisors periodically test the proficiency of personnel in performing security sweeps of courtrooms. The results of such tests should be kept on file for training and evaluation purposes.

**Comment:**

None

## **Search of Jury Room**

- 11.08** Policy and procedure should provide that jury rooms will be searched before the start and at the conclusion of each day of court proceedings to detect any threats or any other thing that could compromise or raise questions about the integrity of the jury.

**Comment:**

None

## **Jury Room Door**

- 11.09** Policy and procedure should provide that the jury room door is kept closed and locked unless the jury is present in the courtroom.

**Comment:**

None

## **Ballistic Material**

- 11.10** Policy and procedure should provide that the judge's bench is reinforced with ballistic material.

**Comment:**

None

## **Duress Alarms**

- 11.11** Policy and procedure should provide that duress alarms are installed at the judge's bench, at a minimum. It is recommended that an additional duress alarm is installed at the clerk's desk. All duress alarms should be tested periodically for proper function. The results of these tests should be recorded.

**Comment:**

None

## **Judge's Chambers**

**11.12** Policy and procedure provide that the judge's chambers should be locked at all times when the judge is not present.

**Comment:**

None

## **Security Personnel**

**11.13** Policy and procedure provide that there will be a sufficient number of security personnel present in the courtroom during proceedings to reasonably ensure safety, security, and good order within the courtroom.

**Comment:**

None

## **Civilian Bailiffs**

**11.14** Policy and procedure should provide that civilian bailiffs assigned to the courtroom are tasked with responsibilities regarding the jury and judge but not responsibilities that would place them in harm's way.

**Comment:**

None

## **High-Risk Trial Pre-planning**

**11.15** Policy and procedure should provide establishment of a communication network between all courthouse functions to address trial-related threats, such as threats to the judiciary, law enforcement, witnesses, jurors, spectators, etc. The information should allow for assessment of the threat and planning for the secure movement and safe-keeping of individuals involved with the threat.

**Comment:**

None

## **Sequestered Juries**

**11.16** Policy and procedures should provide for pre-planning of security procedures regarding sequestered juries including, but not limited to, arrangements for lodging, meals, and transportation.

**Comment:**

None

# Chapter Twelve

## Inmate Security

**Principle:** Inmates facing trial have the same legal rights as those accused of crimes but who are not held in custody. Inmates, by virtue of being in custody, present a special set of considerations regarding courtroom security, with prevention of escape being the most obvious. There is the additional threat of harm to the defendant (inmate) by friends and family of the victim that must be considered. Additionally, not all inmates present in court would be defendants; some could have the role of witness. Security concerns must be balanced against the inmate's right to a fair and unbiased trial.

### Transport/Security Personnel

**12.01** Written policy and procedure should provide that on every transport of an inmate between the jail and court, sufficient number of sworn, certified deputies must perform the transport. There should be an appropriate ratio of security personnel to inmates.

Law enforcement personnel assigned to transport or inmate movement duties should be equipped with handcuffs, a firearm, and portable radio at a minimum. Certified jail or detention officers assisting with transports or inmate supervision at the courthouse should be equipped with handcuffs and portable radio at a minimum.

**Comment:**

Certified jail or detention officers can assist a sworn, certified deputy, but there must be at least one sworn, certified deputy present in the transport vehicle.

### Transport Vehicle

**12.02** Written policy and procedure should provide that transport vehicles are free of contraband, weapons, and mechanical defects likely to cause a vehicle breakdown or breach of security. The vehicle should be equipped with security components to prevent escapes.

**Comment:**

None

### Transport Escorts

**12.03** Written policy and procedure should provide that court security personnel determine if additional escort vehicles will be required to affect a safe transport of inmates between the jail and court facility.

**Comment:**

None

**Search of Inmates Before and After Transport**

**12.04** Written policy and procedure provide that each inmate is physically searched prior to loading the inmates into the transport vehicle. A search of each inmate after arrival at the transport destination should also be required.

**Comment:**

This applies regardless of the origin of the transport or destination.

**Inmate Restraints**

**12.05** Written policy and procedures should provide for the application of adequate restraint devices that would reasonably prevent an escape; an assault against security personnel, other inmates, or any other person; or an attempt to take away a weapon from security personnel. Reasonable use of restraints while in the holding area or other location within the courthouse should be specified.

**Comment:**

Full restraints, including handcuffs, waist belt or chain, and leg irons are recommended. The agency should maintain additional sets of restraints at the court facility for persons taken into custody there.

**Accounting for Inmates Transported**

**12.06** Written policy and procedure should establish a system of accountability for court security personnel regarding inmates transported to the court facility and the jail that would cause immediate recognition that an inmate is missing.

**Comment:**

None

**Inmate Entrance to Courthouse**

**12.07** Written policy and procedure should provide that inmates are brought into the courthouse or courthouse annex in an entrance separate from the general public. Where this is not possible, the entrance and approach to the entrance will be cleared of everyone except the inmates and security detail.

**Comment:**

None

## **Inmate Holding Areas**

- 12.08** Written policy and procedure should provide that inmates are held in a secure holding area while awaiting court. There should be no contact of any kind between inmates and the general public during this time. Inmates should be under the supervision of security personnel while in the holding facility. There should be a call button or duress alarm at the holding area for inmates and security personnel to summon assistance, if needed.

The holding area must be cleared of structural defects, missing structural components, weapons, contraband, or any other item posing a threat to safety, security, or good order of the court facility and the jail facility before inmates are placed in the holding area and after they are removed.

Written policy and procedure should extend weapon security measures used in the jail to the courthouse or courthouse annex inmate holding area. Additionally, there should be a first-aid kit near the holding area.

The inmate holding area should be under monitored, continuously recorded video surveillance

### **Comment:**

Certified jail or detention officers can be used in this regard, as the courthouse holding facility can be considered to be an extension of the jail.

## **Attorney – Inmate Visits**

- 12.09** Written policy and procedure should provide that strict prisoner security must be maintained during visits between inmates and their attorneys. Security personnel should not be in a position to hear the conversation between the inmate and the attorney.

### **Comment:**

None

## **Inmate Movement**

- 12.10** Written policy and procedure should provide that whenever possible, inmates move through hallways and elevators not accessible by the public. If the restricted hallways or elevators are also used by judges or other courthouse staff, or there are no restricted hallways or elevators available, inmates should not be moved through the hallway or onto the elevator until it is safe to do so.

Inmates should be escorted by no less than two (2) deputies while moving through the court facility.



**Comment:**

None

**Inmate Entrance to Courtroom**

- 12.11** Written policy and procedure should provide that inmates are brought into the courtroom from an entrance not used by the public, courthouse staff, or judge. If this is not possible, the inmate should not be moved through the entrance until it is safe to do so.

The inmate(s) should be kept far enough away from spectators to prevent assault or the passage of contraband.

**Comment:**

None

**Restraints in the Courtroom**

- 12.12** Written policy and procedures should provide alternative measures for maintaining prisoner security whenever the judge orders restraints to be removed from the inmate.

**Comment:**

Alternatives might include availability of a TASER® or electronic stun belt.

**Deployment of Security Personnel in Courtroom**

- 12.13** Written policy and procedure should provide for adequate deployment of armed (and possibly unarmed) security personnel within the courtroom to prevent or stop disruption. Responsibilities should include, at a minimum, protection for the judge, security and protection of the inmate, physical protection of jury, protection of jury integrity, protection of all witnesses and all hearing participants, and maintenance of order in the gallery.

**Comment:**

Security personnel assigned to the courtroom could be in uniform or plain-clothes.

# Chapter Thirteen

## Emergency Procedures

**Principle:** Emergency procedures must be based on objectives that are consistent with the agency philosophy for the safety of the public, courthouse employees and officials, security personnel, and inmates. Without identified emergency plan objectives, only rudimentary procedures for handling emergencies are in place. The objectives of emergency plans are:

- To provide guidelines and instructions to security staff on how to react to abnormal situations;
- To protect lives of the public, courthouse employees and officials, security personnel, and inmates during unusual situations;
- To provide measures for controlling inmates in an emergency situation; and
- To minimize the severity of the disorder.

### Emergency Plans

**13.01** Written policy and procedures for emergency situations shall be operational, including but not limited to:

- Escapes
- Taking of Hostages
- Fires
- Bomb Threats
- Riots/Other Disturbances
- Hazardous Material Contamination
- Civil Disturbances in the Community
- Natural Disaster/Severe Weather
- Suicide
- Active shooter
- Other Deaths
- Other crimes

The plan shall outline Sheriff's staff responsibilities, evacuation procedures, and subsequent disposition of the inmates. Such plans shall be formulated in cooperation with the appropriate agencies.

**Comment:**

It is recommended that a "MOU" be completed between each cooperating agency.

**Emergency Plan Training**

**13.02** All facility personnel shall be trained in the implementation of written emergency plans to include quarterly practiced emergency procedures.

**Comment:**

Emergency plan should be reviewed and updated annually. Invite first responders, particularly the SWAT or other emergency response team, to do a walk-through of the court building. Encourage the SWAT team to utilize the court building as part of their own training program.

**Emergency Response Team**

**13.03** Where there is a special unit of law enforcement employees to assist in the event of disturbances, those employees shall be selected and evaluated continuously according to written criteria and receive special training in methods of negotiation and emergency situation management.

**Comment:**

None

**Emergency Response Equipment**

**13.04** Emergency response and evacuation equipment shall be regularly maintained and shall be of sufficient quantity to ensure that all active response personnel are properly equipped.

**Comment:**

None

**Crime Scene Integrity**

**13.05** When a crime is suspected to have been committed within the facility, medical aid, searches, and the preservation of evidence shall be governed by written policy and procedures.

**Comment:**

None

## **Maintenance of Jury Integrity**

- 13.06** Emergency plans should provide for contingencies to maintain the integrity of the jury to the fullest extent possible.

**Comment:**

None

## **Courthouse Occupant Training**

- 13.07** Written procedures for each office located within the courthouse should clearly describe the role and actions officials and employees of each office should take in the event of various emergencies. Periodic training should be provided to all courthouse employees regarding their roles and actions in various emergency situations consistent with the emergency plans established by the Sheriff's office. Occupants should participate in periodic drills and tests. The written procedures should be provided to each office and official located within the building covered under the procedure.

**Comment:**

The procedures should include designated staging areas and accounting for all personnel. It is recommended that courthouse occupant training be conducted at least annually.

## **Evaluation of Drill Performance**

- 13.08** Following a drill or practice emergency, all personnel participating in the drill should be allowed to provide feedback to improve or refine the emergency procedures.

**Comment:**

None

## **Protection of High Risk Personnel**

- 13.09** Emergency plans should include provisions for protection of judges and other high-risk personnel.

**Comment:**

The emergency plan, especially evacuation plans, should designate security personnel to accompany judges and other high-risk personnel at all times or escort them to a secure location pending resolution of the emergency or evacuation.

## Resources

[\*Creating a User-Friendly Court Structure and Environment\*](#)

National Association for Court Management, 2016

[\*Steps to Best Practices for Court Building Security\*](#)

National Center for State Courts, 2010

[\*Court Security Handbook, Ten Essential Elements for Court Security and Emergency Preparedness\*](#)

Conference of Chief Justices & Conference of State Court Administrators, 2010

[\*Continuity of Court Operations, Steps for COOP Planning\*](#)

National Center for State Courts, 2010

[\*Courthouse Security \(Chapter 4\)\*](#)

California Trial Court Facilities Standards, Judicial Council of California, 2011

[\*Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design\*](#)

*Emergency Operations Plan*

Judicial Council of Georgia, 2005

[\*Mini-Symposium on Court Security\*](#)

Justice System Journal, National Center for State Courts, 2011

[\*Colorado Courthouse Security Resource Guide\*](#)

Colorado State Court Administrators Office, 2008

[\*Utah Judicial Facility Design Standards\*](#)

Utah Courts, 2016