

From: Lou Serrano

Sent: Tuesday, December 28, 2021 5:23 PM

To: Juvenile Probation Counties <Juvenile.Probation.Counties@TJJD.Texas.Gov>

Subject: Emergency Response - COVID-19

Good evening

Earlier this week, TJJD made a request from the Texas Division of Emergency Management to provide needed services within the state secure facilities. Over the past week, Texas has seen a drastic increase in positive COVID cases at a time we were already faced with a national worker shortage that were resulting in historically low staffing levels and made worse by the challenges of the holiday season. We know many of our juvenile probation departments that operate facilities are dealing with the same issues.

Although some of you have not yet been impacted by the recent influx of COVID cases, when you do get a positive staff or youth it seems to spread really fast, resulting in the need for staff to be out for several days. We have had a few departments reach out to us asking how they can plan, or begin to implement certain measures to make certain they can continue to operate safe and secure facilities. We would ask that you consider the following:

If you have certified JPO and CAO's *who receive the following training*, they can count in the ratio and operate like a JSO without taking the exam,

1. HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases (344.622(b)(9))
2. Everything in 344.624
3. Have current certification in CPR, first aid, and facility's personal restraint technique.

For anyone else, they may be brought in to operate in the way that is spelled out in the description of duties (see attached) that is currently being utilized by TJJD. This would need to be crafted for the local juvenile facility, utilizing the template provided. The description of duties was developed by TJJD when obtaining the services of a 3rd party contractor for staff.

Some other thoughts that a department might consider when moving forward to address staffing levels:

- In looking at "other staff" to assist with coverage - start with certified JPO's and CAO's and try to meet the items we cover above
- If it is such an emergency that you have to get staff on the floor (JPO's and CAO's not yet certified, or that have not completed the items listed above) have them perform in accordance with the description of duties that have been modified for your facility – but still work to get the 3 items covered ASAP so you can have them operate like any other JSO
- If you get to the point that it is "all hands on deck" utilize any other department, county staff needed to cover the facility following the description of duties. Possibly consider a "buddy system" of tenured employees linked to new/less experienced employees. Be certain to consider a review of the facility suicide prevention plan, and the reporting requirements related to ANE.

We want to make sure that our county probation departments are provided every consideration necessary to continue the safe and secure operations of our juvenile justice system. As always, and as referenced in previous guidance to the probation field, any deviation from standards should be

communicated to the local juvenile board in response to the pandemic. If your staffing levels reach a point that you feel the need to reach out to the Texas Department of Emergency Management, this should be discussed with your county local emergency management prior to making such a request.

As always, we appreciate everything that is being done by our local juvenile probation departments. We know these are very difficult times, however, I know we will continue to do everything we can do to meet the needs of our youth and communities.

Stay Safe

Lou Serrano
Deputy Executive Director for Probation Services

Description of Duties
TJJD Support - December 2021

Support Staff Responsibilities

1. Pre-Entry Screening. Assigned personnel will be required to undergo pre-entry screening before entering a TJJD Facility, including a temperature check and other health checks. Anyone who does not pass the screening will be asked to leave the facility. TJJD has provided personnel a list of items prohibited on TJJD facilities and the entry search procedure and guidelines. Personnel must present a government-issued form of identification.
2. Pre-Service Training. Each assigned personnel will be provided pre-service training by TJJD.
3. Interaction with Youth. Assigned personnel may verbally interact with youth at the facility in order to resolve minor issues based on training provided by TJJD. For moderate to higher level issues, or for youth who need to leave their rooms to use the bathroom, personnel will alert TJJD staff regarding the situations. Assigned personnel should not physically engage with youth in the care of TJJD or attempt in any way to physically restrain them.
4. Incident Response. Assigned personnel will receive TJJD-issued radios and will notify TJJD staff to intercede if direct contact or interaction with a youth is required.
5. Youth Supervision – No TJJD Staff. All youth supervision by assigned personnel will be conducted while youth are secured in their individual rooms. Personnel will perform safety and welfare monitoring on youth, pursuant to TJJD standards and training, and document the youth's condition on provided door logs or through TJJD's electronic monitoring system. If a youth appears to be in distress, personnel will immediately communicate through TJJD's radio system to alert TJJD staff to respond immediately to the situation. Safety and welfare checks on youth secured in their rooms must occur in random intervals not to exceed 15 minutes. In some cases, a TJJD staff will be present while assigned personnel are on the dorm and youth are secured in their rooms. This typically is to provide additional supervision specifically for youth on the dorm who are on a higher observation level such as a suicide watch.
6. Youth Supervision – TJJD Staff present. At times, TJJD staff may be present to allow youth out of their rooms. Personnel will continue to be assigned to the dorm to assist TJJD staff; however, assigned personnel will not be responsible for providing supervision of the youth out of their room, interacting with them, or conducting any programming for the youth.
7. Additional duties. In the event assigned personnel are not needed on the dorm to provide supervision for youth secured in their room, personnel may be assigned to provide necessary supplies to the dorm required by TJJD staff or youth (e.g., transport meals, additional PPEs, or other programmatic materials). Assigned personnel may also be requested to assist TJJD staff in conducting COVID-19 tests on staff or on youth while other TJJD staff are present. Personnel may also be required to submit to self-administered COVID-19 testing.