Classification Implementation Manual

For Smaller Jails

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CHAPTER 1

SMALL JAIL INMATE CLASSIFICATION:

GENERAL BACKGROUND

In the last decade, inmate classification has re-emerged as one of the most critical issues impacting the management, efficiency, and safety of jails. A major upgrade to classification methods and management training has occurred during in the last decade. This renewed emphasis on classification has occurred primarily in large and medium-sized jails. Small jails have lagged behind in the move to improve classification.

In this document we argue that classification is as important for small jails as it is for larger facilities. Neglect of the classification procedure in small jails may be hazardous and reflects a profound misunderstanding and underestimation of the role of classification in all jails. Neglect of classification or the continued use of inadequate classification procedures may seriously undermine the degree to which small jails can complete their missions. Furthermore, many of the excuses (such as staff shortages) for avoiding rigorous classification in small jails are rapidly disappearing following developments in efficient and easy-to-use objective classification systems, speedier access to data, and relatively inexpensive computerized methods.

This document provides an overview of inmate classification for small jails. Such jails constitute the majority of local jails in the United States. This document is not highly technical, but it is aimed at an audience of small jail practitioners and administrators who must cope on a daily basis with the unique implementation challenges that exist in these institutions. A further goal is to provide a resource manual for instructional training processes as guidance to administrative staff as they plan the implementation and improvement of classification systems in their local jails.

By “small jails,” we mean jails that have an average daily population of less than 150 inmates. These small jails account for a very large segment of all jails in the U.S.
The resource challenges of small local jails are often seen as obstacles to the successful implementation and use of effective inmate classification methods. However, the purposes and roles of classification are equally important in jails of all sizes and thus cannot be ignored by the small jail. We acknowledge that special efforts must be made to provide training and effective implementation strategies that focus on the particular challenges of small jails.

To augment the training goals of this document we include a set of Microsoft PowerPoint™ presentation slides on an attached CD that may be used as training materials for small jail practitioners or administrators. Additionally, to provide further support for the small jail that may have limited financial resources, Chapter 5, which addresses automation and software, offers suggestions regarding inexpensive jail software that offers sound objective inmate classification for small jails.

**Why Is Classification Critical for Small Jails?**

The goals of virtually every major correctional policy (prisoner safety, fairness, security, appropriate services, and so on) are as important for small jails as larger jails and must be vigilantly addressed in both kinds of facilities. It is clear that classification decisions are directly linked to all of these goals. Classification has been described as one of the most critical tools for jail managers because it underlies virtually all processing, treatment, and offender management decisions. It has also been described the “nerve center” of a jail. Objective Jail Classification (OJC) procedures are used to guide both line staff and policy staff in decisions regarding housing, security and custody, programming, case management, and most offender processing decisions (Austin, 1998; Brennan, 1987b; Wells & Brennan, 1992). The most fundamental correctional policy goals (e.g., fairness and equity, consistency, reliability, legal defensibility of decisions, access to appropriate treatment, least restrictive custody, safety of inmates and staff, public safety, orderliness) are all linked to classification. Chapter 2 addresses in detail the roles and policy importance of classification in the small jail.
The Status and Challenges of Objective Classification

During 2002 and 2003, we had the opportunity to conduct interviews with staff representatives from several small jails who were attending OJC workshops sponsored by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC). In each case these staff were seeking to upgrade their existing approaches to classification and to adopt objective classification methods. These interviews were informative in clarifying some of the major obstacles that face the small jail that is interested in implementing OJC methods. This section enumerates some of these main challenges.

Staffing Issues

As expected, both the number of staff and staff training/supervision were often mentioned as key challenges for the small jail. This creates a need for OJC procedures to be extremely efficient, easy to use, easy to learn, reliable, and valid. The major staffing issues include

- **Competence problems and training**: A common finding is that the staff responsible for classification in small jails are seldom formally trained in OJC procedures. Additionally, supervisory procedures may be missing or provided by a supervisor who also has never been trained in formal OJC.

- **Staff shortages**: We noted that in some small jails there are serious staff shortages or limited numbers of staff available for OJC tasks. Obviously, this undermines the integrity and accuracy of classification decision-making, which may result in the many negative consequence of classification errors (see Chapter 2).

- **Multiple job assignments or “wearing many hats”**: Although perhaps unavoidable in small jails, staff are frequently assigned multiple tasks so that classification is only one of the many different jobs for which an individual staff member is responsible. Such multiple job assignments means that the staff conducting classification may have to prioritize other tasks, which may be seen as more urgent, such that classification tasks fall through the cracks. In this case, classification may be ignored or streamlined. A second danger with this type of
job design is that expertise may vary considerably among staff members with no consistency in the manner in which classification is conducted. Thus, consistency, reliability, and fairness may be undermined.

Invalid Methods of Classification

Many small jails continue to rely on invalid classification procedures that are ineffective and fail to achieve the basic missions of a jail. The nationwide shift to OJC has been more widespread in medium and larger jails than in small jails. The following invalid practices are common in small jails:

- **Dominance of subjective informal judgments**: Staff in small jails often rely on the traditional approach of subjective “informal” judgment. This is well known to produce a disproportionate number of over-classification errors and often oversimplifies classification to basic demographic and legal factors (e.g., felons vs. misdemeanants, adults vs. juveniles, sentenced vs. unsentenced).

- **Classification by space available**: In this approach, the officer assigns a detainee to any housing that is currently available: the inmate is housed wherever there is an empty bunk. The hazards of this are well known and may result in commingling of inmates without regard to their criminal histories or offense patterns. It may produce extremely dangerous situations.

- **Unvalidated methods of OJC**: Although it is an advantage for a small jail to adopt OJC, we noted that some had adopted unique and unvalidated classification procedures. Many of these unique systems are embedded in software provided by local or regional computer vendors. However, jail classification is a highly technical process, and it appears that many local software vendors do not have sufficient expertise in the research that underlies the validity and statistics of OJC procedures. The hazard is that design flaws may be embedded within such software and may remain undetected by staff. These flaws may produce systematic misclassification of offenders.

- **Streamlining and oversimplified procedures**: Perhaps as a result of staff shortages, another unfortunate occurrence is that classification procedures are
abbreviated and streamlined. This may sabotage many aspects of classification from data collection to interviewing, forms content, and so on. For example, a booking/intake form may contain only abbreviated medical screening and may miss many key data elements needed for criminal histories, disciplinary histories, and for special “keep separates.” Another form of streamlining occurs when staff eliminates the face-to-face interview and OJC degenerates into paper-driven process.

- **Reclassification omissions**: In small jails, this important procedure is often ignored or occurs only informally following an incident. Reclassification is not assigned as a regular staff duty.

**Inadequate Documentation of Policy and Procedures**

In some small jails we found that not all of the supporting policy and procedure documents (e.g., data dictionary, classification policy and procedure manual, users guides) were clearly written and thoroughly documented. Thus, an important task for many small jails is to complete the classification policy and procedure manual, clearly define the OJC methods to be used, provide clear and precise definitions of the procedural steps and classification instruments, and so on.

These procedural omissions have many negative consequences, including inconsistency, bias, prejudice, personal favoritism, inadequate documentation, over-classification errors, higher risk of inmate litigation, and so on.

**Architectural and Housing Space Deficiencies**

Another common challenge is that the housing options and architectural requirements for effective classification are inadequate in many small jails. These deficiencies can prevent classification from being fully implemented in the sense that a certain amount of commingling of custody levels is unavoidable under these circumstances. **Classification ideally should be paralleled by a housing plan that provides sufficient space for minimum, medium, and maximum custody inmates, as well as areas for disciplinary segregation, administrative segregation, medical**
and mental health areas, and so forth (Chapter 7 addresses housing plan issues in detail).

A recurrent problem is that some small jail staff passively assume that such housing limitations totally undermine the possibility and value of OJC. Such staff adopt a resistant posture and may use this argument as an excuse to reject OJC and to stick to a business-as-usual approach of subjective and space-available classification. This reflects a persistent misunderstanding that housing/cell limitations make classification irrelevant and that OJC cannot be implemented and should be abandoned. The rationale is that the available cells are equivalent (i.e., have the same security levels) or are insufficient for the complete separation of detainees into different housing levels, and classification becomes irrelevant. This is reflected in statements such as “Classification makes no sense in our facility because we are too small.”

This argument would make sense if the only purpose of classification were to make housing decisions. However, it misses the key point that classification affects many areas beyond housing decisions (see Chapter 2). The architecture of a jail is not the determining factor in housing minimums with minimums, mediums with mediums, and so on. Many jails, large and small, in fact have little or no distinction between security types of cells and yet effectively use OJC to manage and supervise their detainees in safe, disciplined, and effective ways and to achieve many of the other purposes that are linked to classification.

We agree that overcrowding and space limitations can weaken the overall effectiveness of OJC if there are insufficient beds so that some commingling of custody levels must occur. Paradoxically, it is in such crowded situations that OJC is most valuable in helping the jail to manage crowding more effectively and in carefully selecting inmates of differing custody levels that can be safely commingled. Classification is essential in confining this commingling to specific modules (rather than spreading it randomly across the jail). Additionally, the classification-related data on the extent and nature (numbers and percentages) of “spillovers” from one security level to the next can help to document the shortages of appropriate housing resources. Finally,
the limited-space argument fails to acknowledge that most of the other multiple benefits of OJC (see Chapter 2) are still needed across the jail.

Classification and Litigation

Small jails are as vulnerable as larger jails to litigation that focuses on inadequate decision-making, classification errors, inmate safety, unfair or inequitable processing decisions, and overcrowded conditions. Classification may be involved in all such problems and is often included in court orders to limit the number of inmates held in a small jail. Small jails face most of the same litigation challenges as larger jails.

Small jails may be especially vulnerable to “parity” concerns and disparate treatment challenges by gender when space limitations result in unequal treatment of female inmates. Parity issues can result from inadequacy of program space, recreational space, and lack of differentiated types of cells (i.e., dorms, pods, singles) for either male or female detainees.

Because OJC is a major component of professional practice in all of corrections (including jails), any errors or deficiencies in classification can result in legal challenges. The deficiencies and challenges listed above and complacency or resistance of some staff make many small jails vulnerable to litigation stemming from classification errors. The next section briefly examines liability issues for the small jail administrator.

Administrative Liabilities

In jails of any size, administrative and policy staff are ultimately responsible for the procedures and behavior of lower-level staff. In regard to classification, the duties of small jail administrative staff are basically the same as those in a large jail. If any breach or omission occurs, administrators may be liable. The litigant only has to demonstrate a failure to perform certain administrative duties and a reasonable link from this failure to a classification error and its consequences. Administrative responsibilities regarding classification include the following:

- Failure to provide staff with acceptable methods and procedures of classification,
- Failure to supervise and direct classification staff,
• Failure to provide training in classification methods, and
• Negligent hiring or retention of incompetent staff.

**Administrative Actions To Reduce Litigation Risks**

We recommend that the small jail administrator be a proactive problem-solver and address classification deficiencies before they result in serious litigation problems. This manual aims to help small jail administrators become skilled in classification problem identification and to be effective problem-solvers and “change agents.” A proactive administration might recommend any of the following actions:

• Appropriate training;
• Effective and efficient OJC methods for staff;
• Adequate supervision;
• Written policy and procedure documents, including an up-to-date and defendable policy and procedure manual;
• Appropriate hiring and screening procedures;
• Retention of sufficient trained staff;
• Awareness of current court decisions regarding classification; and
• A systematic process to identify problems and develop plans to resolve them.

Although some of these practices can prove challenging in the small jail setting, they are prudent for small jail administrators if they desire to achieve excellence in classification decision-making.

**Trends in Offender Classification**

Small jails, as noted above, have tended to lag behind larger jails in adopting the practices suggested by the most recent trends in offender classification. The important trends in the last decade regarding OJC include the following:

1. Adoption of **objective data-based classification procedures**: This represents almost a paradigm shift in classification decision-making across the entire field of
corrections. The traditional style of discretionary subjective judgment as a basis for jail classification is being augmented by numerically based and standardized procedures. These provide an explicit logic that is based on objective verifiable data, with easy-to-use and reliable standardized formats. The legal challenges against the traditional style focus on bias, inconsistency, unreliability, and the often inscrutable logic that staff may use in their classification decisions.

Additionally, evidence from research into human judgment and decision-making in a variety of fields has consistently shown that simple numerically based systems almost always outperform human judgment.

2. **Automated classification systems**: A second trend that greatly improves the effectiveness, ease of use, and efficiency of classification involves the automation of OJC procedures. The data retrieval (i.e., of criminal histories and disciplinary histories) component of classification thus becomes simplified, speedier, and less prone to error. The second advantage of automated classification is that it allows many useful population profiling and policy analysis reports to be rapidly produced, giving jail managers and administrators very powerful tools for the analysis of offender databases and for monitoring jail operations.

3. **Offender classification for reintegration and community placement**: For several decades, jail classification focused only on internal classification; that is, it was regarded as a tool for internal management, security, and processing of offenders while detained. However, given overcrowding pressures, the need for re-entry planning, and the fact that most detainees re-enter the community, there is increasing interest in offender classifications to guide re-entry placements, levels of community supervision, and treatment planning.

**Participation and Input from Small Jail Practitioners**

In compiling this document, we sought the input and participation of many staff from small jails who attended NIC workshops on objective classification (during 2002/2003) and who have implemented classification in their own local facilities. These practitioners provided valuable perspectives in understanding the roadblocks and
obstacles to classification in the small jail. The quality of this document has been greatly
improved by the insights and information contributed by these experienced staff
members.

**Goals of this Document**

1. *To address the needs of practitioners in small jails*: Given the challenges and
   resource deficiencies of small jails, this document is designed to help these
   practitioners to implement effective OJC in their facilities.

2. *To provide training materials for OJC in small jails*: Each chapter is designed to
   address important curriculum issues in the design and implementation of OJC. Most
   chapters contain PowerPoint™ handouts that may be used in an instructional setting
   by local trainers. These are augmented by a CD that contains these PowerPoint™
   presentations for use by the local trainer.

3. *To provide background material on OJC and its implementation in a small jail
   setting*: In addition to the training materials mentioned above, each chapter contains
   background information gleaned from OJC workshops and particularly from
   practitioners from small jails who have attended these workshops in the past. Their
   experiences and input have been very valuable in preparing this manual.
CHAPTER 2

THE ROLES AND BENEFITS OF OBJECTIVE CLASSIFICATION

Many jail administrators are only partially aware of the multiple roles of offender classification. This lack of awareness unfortunately often results in administrators paying little attention to classification procedures, and in a worst-case scenario, not providing sufficient resources for this function. Administrators may create a “mission impossible” in which classification responsibilities are given to inadequately trained staff who have insufficient time to do the work and inadequate supervision. Not surprisingly, classification fiascos and errors occur. This is not a prudent way to run a jail and often results wasted resources and staff time in sorting out the chaotic and damaging consequences of poor classification decisions—all of which leaves the jail in extreme legal vulnerability.

The above scenario may occur in either large or small jails if senior administrative staff does not appreciate the importance of the classification process in the management of offenders. Additionally, to obtain the maximum benefits from classification, both jail managers and line officers should be aware of its many roles and benefits in a jail. Therefore, this chapter briefly describes the importance of classification in correctional institutions with particular reference to the small jail.

Classification Supports Multiple Policy Goals

Throughout criminal justice there has always been a strong recognition of the importance of valid and reliable offender classification. More than two decades ago, Flynn (1982) stated that classification was central to the corrections process. For jails it has been repeatedly noted that classification is critical in supporting virtually all correctional policies (ACA, 1982; Brennan, 1987b; Fowler & Rans, 1982). Many forces have caused this increasing appreciation of the importance of classification, including legal challenges, overcrowding, concern over excessive restrictiveness, scarce fiscal resources, construction costs, the need for efficiency, and the serious costs of classification errors (to inmates, staff, and the public). The perennial concern with public
safety has forced an examination of the causes and costs of false negative classification errors (Brennan 1993; Clear, 1988).

The courts have focused on poor classification as an intolerable burden. As a consequence, there has been a strong legal movement to upgrade classification in jails of all sizes. A driving force has been the recognition that classification is a basic decision-making process that supports most of the correctional policy goals of any jail or prison. This is profoundly illustrated by a 1970 Rhode Island court decision (see Gettinger, 1982) that clearly indicates the multiple roles of classification in both jails and prisons:

Classification is essential to the operation of an orderly and safe prison. It is a prerequisite for the rational allocation of whatever program opportunities exist within the institution. It enables the institution to gauge the proper custody level of an inmate, to identify the inmate’s education, vocational, and psychological needs, and to separate non-violent inmates from the more predatory. Classification is indispensable for any coherent future planning.

Alexander (1982) similarly noted that any single classification decision is driven by multiple goals. He noted that a classification decision to place someone into maximum security can simultaneously respond to goals of prevention and containment, punishment, rehabilitation, and deterrence.

The Roles of Classification and Their Relevance in Small Jails

It is not an easy task to clarify precisely the many links between classification and jail correctional policies and purposes. It is obvious that jails serve multiple policy goals, some of which are not immediately obvious, and that others may be in conflict (Brennan, 1987b; Mackenzie, 1990). Such confusion has been damaging to correctional institutions, and jail administrators should understand these various goals. In this section we alert small jail administrators and staff to the importance of this process. This chapter has the following two main goals:

4. To demonstrate that classification is equally relevant for the small jail as for larger jails, and

5. To describe the main roles and purposes of classification.
As noted earlier, administrative staff in small jails often do not fully appreciate the complexities and multiple purposes of classification (Glaser, 1987). Many are unaware of its connection to major correctional policies and goals. This can result in classification being poorly used (e.g., for planning, monitoring, population control), inadequately integrated with operations, or only partially implemented (Brennan, 1999; Harris & Smith, 1993). Administrative misinterpretation and confusion over the role of classification in correctional facilities often results in administrative failure to provide clear guidelines or policy priorities to staff that must actually conduct classification. Any failure among line staff to understand the purposes of classification may produce careless classification, routinized or rigid decision-making, resistance and cynicism (Brennan, 1999; Lipsky, 1980; Prottas, 1979). Classification staff in the small jail may thoughtlessly conduct “space available” classification and remain largely unaware of the costs and inefficiencies that this may impose on the small jail and how it undermines jail policy goals.

The following sections briefly review the multiple roles and contributions of a valid offender classification in jails.

**Foundation of All Inmate Processing Decisions**

From first contact with the entering detainee, jail staff must make critical decisions regarding many inmate processing matters (e.g., housing, critical “keep-separate” decisions, acceptance of the person into the jail or referral of the arrestee to a mental-health center or a hospital for treatment). Essentially, none of these processing decisions can be made without critical information that provides a logical and rational basis for the decision. These processing decisions must be conducted by the screening and classification staff in both large and small jails and cannot be avoided. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that screening and classification provides the foundation for most housing, placement, eligibility requirement, and referral decisions.

**Inmate and Staff Safety**

A priority goal of jails of all sizes is to provide a safe environment for all inmates and staff. This goal partially relies on identification of violent offenders, their separation
from potential victims, and appropriate supervision. All “keep-separate” decisions should be driven by information collected by classification staff during the initial classification process. Safety is a major priority in all institutional classifications. Failure to separate predators from victim types may result in violent victimization, an unsafe environment, anxiety, and lawsuits. Classification must be carefully linked to the differential supervision of the more dangerous inmates at different custody levels. Suicide screening procedures similarly attempt to identify the high suicide risk and provide appropriate surveillance and treatment. The courts have seen classification as a guarantor of the right to be protected from violent assault and the fear of violence (Tonry, 1987). Reducing fear and anxiety relies on the ability of classification to produce valid separations of inmates at different risk levels. Classification thus plays a role in producing an orderly, safe, predictable, and controlled environment, which should reduce anxiety despite the presence of dangerous persons.

Even in the very small jail with limited options for appropriate separations, inmate safety is a crucial priority that cannot be ignored. The starting point for coping with such safety threats is the identification of dangerous offenders by means of a careful initial classification process. **Paradoxically, the limited space of the small jail may heighten the importance of risk classification.** Classification assumes a preventive role by alerting jail staff to the need for appropriate preventive strategies whenever such risks are identified. Clearly, staff will be in a more advantageous position when forewarned about such risks than if they remain ignorant.

**Public Safety and Security**

In small communities, public safety is an important goal of a jail. Preventing escapes and minimizing the likelihood that any high-risk or dangerous prisoner is given a placement with easy access to the community are critical responsibilities of classification staff. This is accomplished by correct identification of escape risks during the initial classification process and by appropriate follow-up processing decisions. Public safety is also partly dependent on valid classification of dangerous offenders and high recidivism risks. Such high risks must be aligned with appropriate security constraints, release recommendations, community placement, and supervision.
Classification levels that are closely linked to community access (e.g., eligibility for community programming, work release, early release) often become a focus of public controversy. False negative classification errors may produce intense media attention, public anger, and a loss of public confidence. These angry community reactions can be just as prevalent and devastating in small communities as they are with larger populations. Small jail administrators must therefore clearly understand the manner in which correct classification supports the fundamental policy goal of public safety.

Rehabilitation and Reintegration

Prisoners have a legal right to appropriate treatment. This does not disappear even when the prisoner is held in a small jail. Additionally, simply warehousing detainees is poor correctional practice and violates the goal of rehabilitation.

Classification is the basic means by which to identify the vocational, educational, mental health, and program needs of inmates. This is a first step in protecting detainees from “deliberate indifference” and assuring the right to receive at least minimally adequate treatment (NIC, 1980) and thus avoiding warehousing and idleness.

More generally, jail classification staff are central in protecting the prisoners’ rights to avoid deterioration, to have access to appropriate programs, to be held in a least restrictive environment, and to minimize isolation from the community. These responsibilities do not disappear in the small jail even though treatment or rehabilitation options may be fewer in the small jail setting. Ignoring these issues may result in litigation and may undermine public safety by allowing prisoners to deteriorate and become further alienated from society.

The role of classification is to provide a basic needs assessment to indicate the rehabilitation needs of the prisoner and achieve least restrictive custody placements. Effective and simple needs assessment instruments are available for small jails and are easily incorporated into the initial classification assessment process (see Chapter 4). Reintegration involves assigning inmates to educational or vocational programs and granting graded access to the community guided by risk assessment. Classification decisions must consider a difficult balance between public safety and the goals of
rehabilitation and reintegration. In fact there may be some conflict between these policy goals. False positive classification errors (i.e., when a prisoner is falsely classified to a higher security level than needed) may undermine rehabilitation goals by limiting an inmate’s access to needed programs or by excessively isolating the detainee from the community. This balancing requires carefully validated risk classification and accurate need assessment.

**Equity, Fairness, and Consistency**

Equity and fairness policies are universal in correctional institutions of any size. Violating these policies is an invitation to litigation. These policies depend on valid and reliable classification. Specifically, fairness requires a classification that avoids errors, bias, and prejudice; has some control over subjective discretion; and has a demonstrated level of validity. The courts have identified objective classification as a way of ensuring consistent and equitable placements for both housing and program access (Gettinger, 1982). The high over classification error rate of subjective classification is simply more likely to lead to highly inconsistent decisions. Invalid classification methods invariably undermine consistency, fairness, and equity. The continuing use of informal and oversimplified methods of classification and untrained staff are both likely to produce errors of classification that may undermine equity and fairness.

**Efficient, Rational Resource Utilization**

A less obvious role of classification is its link to fiscal efficiency and minimizing waste of jail resources. This becomes crucial in small jails where resources and staff time are limited. As noted earlier, the courts identified classification as “a prerequisite for the rational allocation of whatever program opportunities exist within the institution.” Classification is also at the core of rational resource allocation. Correct matching of inmates to services (vis à vis security level, housing assignments, treatment programs, etc.) is the foundation of efficient resource allocation. It is wasteful to provide services or intensive supervision that is not needed. Classifying inmates to inappropriately high security clearly wastes resources. Conversely, if needed resources are wrongly withheld
from eligible inmates, the results may be failure to rehabilitate, lawsuits, frustration, violence, and so on. Almost every instance of classification error may waste resources as a result of “mismatching” and lowered efficiency. A 1984 NIC report indicated that

The increasing demand for both security and program resources, coupled with the probability that the availability of both will decrease, calls for an especially efficient and effective classification decision that will make the most advantageous use of physical, financial, and human resources. (p. 9)

This is particularly important for the small jail that has limited resources. In these situations, correct matching of inmates to resources is even more important and any use of classification procedures that produces mismatches may have even more deleterious effects than in larger jails where more resources of programs and staff time may be available.

Effective Management and Policy Planning

Classification data can play a critical role in planning of budgets, staffing needs, estimating physical space requirements, planning for new jails, and monitoring jail operations (Brennan & Wells, 1993; Fowler & Rans, 1982; Mackenzie, 1990). Planning for new construction and staffing needs is equally critical in small and large jails. Planning relies on statistical breakdowns of the inmate population into subgroup sizes and the computation of future trends. Disaggregated trends used to identify specific target populations are more informative for planning than global jail population estimations in projecting specific housing needs. They allow projections of various subpopulations and differentiated levels of need for various resources and services.

An interesting finding is that in most published cases in which jails have shifted from subjective to objective classification, the prior planning for new construction (generally based on the prior informal classification) typically shows a gross overestimation of the need for maximum security cells. Without valid objective classification, planning may overestimate the need for maximum security cells and underestimate the needs for minimum security space (Austin, 1983; Levinson, 1982). OJC can help planners avoid excessive and wasteful expenditures on high security cells.
Orderly Processing and Routine Procedures

Jails, like all people-processing bureaucracies, cannot plan for, respond to, or cope with completely individualized cases. Resource limitations ultimately prevent any jail from dealing with completely unique cases. Until people are formally classified, no bureaucracy can deal with them (Lipsky, 1980; Prottas, 1979). Institutional actions, responses, and decisions require that any new inmate be redefined in a bureaucratic manner to fit bureaucratic policies, procedures, and person categories. Such institutional or bureaucratic responses are always designed to deal with types or categories of client/inmate as formalized in policy and procedure manuals.

In essence, all correctional institutions can only deal with classes of clients in accordance with their policies and procedures (Lipsky, 1980). Classification is the process that renders individuals into categories that can then be addressed using planned, policy-driven, and standardized institutional responses (e.g., housing assignments, treatment intervention, suicide watch). An identical process occurs in hospitals under the label of triage. Preliminary categorizations and simplifications are the basis for selecting standardized institutional responses. Classification is the basis and starting point that simplifies the overwhelming diversity of offenders entering a facility.

The reclassification function also supports institutional orderliness. It provides a consistent and standardized procedure to guide inmate movement, re-housing, and transfer. Informal transfers, sometimes known as backdoor classifications or midnight moves, may introduce chaos and disorganization because of their unpredictable and capricious nature. Without an objective reclassification system, transfers or housing moves can degenerate into ad hoc confusion. Crowded jails in particular often lose control over such moves. Consistent reclassification thus helps to reduce disorder by limiting the arbitrariness and unpredictability of movement decisions.

Social Control and Discipline

Every jail seeks to maintain good discipline and social control over its detainees. Pro-social behavior is critical in jails and is a critical policy goal. Classification fulfills several roles in regard to discipline and control that are not immediately obvious. First,
classification contributes to stability and order through appropriate identification, separation, and placement in appropriate surveillance levels. Second, classification contributes to control over inmates’ behavior by determining their access to differential rewards and punishments. For example, misbehavior may be punished by reclassifying the person to a less privileged level, and good behavior may be rewarded by reclassification to more privileged levels. **Classification at the line level plays a role in regulating inmate behavior (Prottas, 1979) and introducing incentives for good behavior.** Inmates are made aware that various classification custody levels have different privileges and sanctions. Jail officers can raise the restrictiveness of classification to manage difficult inmates who are exhibiting negative behaviors. Third, discipline must also be fair, and such fairness can be achieved by basing reclassification decisions on explicit verifiable behaviors as set forth by policy. In the absence of explicit reclassification procedures, such discretionary moves are easily abused, as such movement decisions rely upon subjective and informal decision-making. **A valid and consistent classification can help maintain order, discipline, and fairness by providing standardized and transparent procedures for moving and reclassifying detainees.**

**Accurate Communication and Nomenclature**

Every jail requires meaningful and consistent labels to describe inmates and accurate communication among staff members. When labels are vague, inconsistent, or meaningless, communication breaks down. This can create serious disorder in any jail.

The problem of inconsistent or erroneous classification labels (e.g., a wrongly designated minimum security inmate who is truly a maximum risk) is also acute when inmates are transferred. Maximum in one institution or unit may not be maximum in another, and such definitions can even vary among staff members at one institution. **Confusion and miscommunication can result from inconsistent nomenclatures. A key role of a valid and consistent classification system is to provide labels that support accurate communication. Invalid, incorrect, or meaningless classification labels may result from design flaw of poor classification systems.** The design flaws of traditional informal classification have included unclear criteria, unclear decision
rules, and uncontrolled discretion. Other deficiencies, such as invalid data, inadequate training, weak implementation, and so on, can all undermine the validity of labels used to convey information about an offender.

**Monitoring and Accountability**

Each jail must monitor whether its policies and procedures are achieving the desired outcomes. The role of classification as a basis for monitoring and evaluating correctional procedures has been recognized as an important contribution. For example, Fowler and Rans (1982) asserted that “classification is the ultimate accountability tool” (p. 23). The categories and data produced by classification provide the basis for monitoring whether the major correctional goals are being achieved.

More specifically, monitoring and evaluating jail policies requires that appropriate data are collected for specific target groups of detainees. Data elements to support various correctional policy goals (e.g., inmate safety, grievances, idleness, access to appropriate programs, efficiency, least restrictive custody, public safety) can be routinely collected only when jail administrators have appropriate measurement and data collection procedures. For example, the goal of least restrictive custody is impacted by an over classification error rate and by the percentage of inmates housed (often deliberately) in security levels higher than needed (Austin, 1983). Current database management and jail classification software are designed to produce automated counts of the degree to which these types of policy violations occur in jails (see Chapter 5).

When data are collected to reflect each major policy, accountability and monitoring become possible. Prottas (1979) indicated that the use of classification data for monitoring is often threatening to both line and administrative staff, which in turn may produce staff resistance or sabotage. Effective monitoring can be undermined by management fear of accountability, apathy, skill deficits, absence of an objective classification system to collect the data, or deliberate suppression.
Institutional Protection from Liability

Jail administrators are increasingly aware that correct classification is a powerful means of avoiding public embarrassment, maintaining good public relations, and avoiding damaging litigation (NIC, 1985) and that erroneous or careless classification can produce public relations disasters. A single classification error (e.g., false negatives) that leads to a violent incident may devastate the public image of the facility, its procedures, and the competence of its staff. Valid classification, adequate training, and qualified supervision are the main defenses against such errors. Objective classification also provides improved documentation and explicit justification for decisions. Subjective methods are weak in both documentation and justifications, which are requisite in legal disputes. Classification procedures should provide a paper trail that simplifies the ability to demonstrate the degree to which staff followed official procedures.

Conversely, if a jail adopts OJC and then fails to follow its own procedures, it again becomes more vulnerable to litigation. Weak or partial implementation may be a particular challenge for small jails because of inadequate training, staffing, and resources. Managers of small jails can help reduce liability by taking the following actions:

1. Maintain a current awareness of court decisions regarding classification;

2. Maintain a vigilant and proactive “problem identifying” style using appropriate monitoring and supervision of classification operations so that deficiencies or problems are quickly identified and solved. This relies on a systematic process to identify problems and develop plans to address them;

3. Maintain an up-to-date policy and procedure manual that specifies standardized OJC procedures for staff to follow; and

4. Maintain and implement adequate staff training in OJC and use supervision procedures to maintain the skills and competency of staff.
Linking Policy to Procedures

Jails of all sizes maintain a mission statement to give direction and policy guidance to staff. A key task of jail leadership is to identify and prioritize policy goals and ensure that they are well aligned with key operational procedures (e.g., classification). This alignment is not always achieved and may break down for several reasons. Small jails are particularly vulnerable because of the prevalence of informal and oversimplified classifications.

Typical policy goals that appear in jail mission statements include staff and inmate safety, fairness and equity, public safety, least restrictive custody, efficient use of jail resources, and so on. Any misalignment between these mission goals and jail procedures can lead to a systematic failure to achieve these policy goals. The classification methods used in a small jail must support rather than sabotage these basic mission priorities.

One potential advantage of small jails is that a consensus around a shared vision may be easier to establish simply because these institutions usually deal with a smaller number of stakeholders. Such consensus can strengthen staff motivation and minimize resistance to change. This alignment between a jail’s mission (policies and correctional goals) is more likely to be achieved if classification procedures incorporate the professional principles and guidelines for classification promulgated by associations such as the ACA and the American Jail Association (AJA) and as laid out in the NIC principles for classification (NIC, 2001; Solomon, 1982).

Misalignment of Classification and Policy Goals

Any change in a jail’s policy goals or mission may demand a concurrent change to classification procedures (Brennan, 1987b; Gottfredson, 1987). This link from jail policy to classification methods has been known for some time, as shown by the following comment from Fowler and Rans:

Value issues interact with technological issues in the design and implementation of classifications systems. In many ways, values determined technologies and their potential outcomes. (1982, p. 19)
Any change of policy (e.g., to be more restrictive or to emphasize rehabilitation) may require an explicit change of classification methods. Restrictive policies require more restrictive classification, whereas liberal policies require less restrictive classification, and so on. For example, the prioritization of intermediate sanctions or a rehabilitative emphasis may require a redesign of classification to identify appropriate low-risk offenders for potential referral to community treatment programs. Fowler and Rans (1982) and others argued correctly that such top-down specification of policy goals is needed to guide the design or selection of classification procedures. Administrative or leadership responsibilities for classification include the following tasks:

1. Create a clear and precise vision of policy priorities and purposes to guide the design or selection of classification methods;
2. Communicate this vision to key stakeholders (staff, community, etc.);
3. Build consensus on this vision and a resourceful coalition to support and implement appropriate classification procedures; and
4. Ensure that the jail’s procedures (e.g., classification) are well aligned with and support these policy goals.

Failure To Clarify a Coherent Policy Orientation

Unfortunately, the task of vision development to guide the precise design of objective classification is not well accomplished in many jails (Brennan, 1999; Harris & Smith, 1993). Studies of implementation failure in jails have shown that vision failures often undermine successful implementation so that the link from policy to procedures is lost. Many jail administrators fail to achieve steps 1 and 2 above with sufficient clarity or consensus. Clearly step 4 cannot be realized if there is confusion or ambiguity regarding step 1 or if steps 2 and 3 are poorly accomplished. Administrators in a small jail must carefully address these four challenges to ensure that the procedures introduced will support rather than sabotage their selected policy goals.
Failure to Balance Multiple Competing Policy Goals

The existence of multiple correctional policies underscores the fact that these diverse policies may compete, which can have a negative impact on thoughtful prioritization. Optimizing one policy goal (e.g., least restrictive custody) may compete with another policy goal (e.g., public safety). Classification decisions are at the center of this balancing problem and are used to resolve them (Alexander, 1982; Brennan, 1999).

A major ongoing problem in jails is that there is no clear agreement over which correctional goals to prioritize (Clear & O’Leary, 1988). A confusing multiplicity of jail goals and policies often appears in the mission statements of jails with little attempt to indicate how to achieve balance between them. A common failure is that administrators simply include many goals in their mission statements but provide no explicit rules to staff on how to prioritize goals or reach a balance between them. This balancing act is implicitly delegated to line staff (who must conduct classifications daily and thus must themselves resolve this policy vacuum. For example, appropriate guidance should be formalized as to how a policy of inmates’ rights and fairness should be balanced against the goals of public safety, deterrence, and incapacitation.

Effective classification must achieve a politically acceptable balance among these competing policy goals. Classification designs sometimes fail to achieve an acceptable balancing of these different policies. The most common unbalanced styles of jail classification involve the following:

1. Over restrictive classification in which too many offenders are classified to high risk categories. This is common in jails that have not adopted OJC;

2. Under restrictive classification in which too many offenders are classified into minimum security levels. This occasionally occurs in jails run by highly liberal administrators or in the presence of extreme political and financial pressure to reduce the jail population;

3. Inadequate prioritization of rehabilitation needs in which administrative and security policies are highly prioritized while insufficient attention is given to rehabilitation and treatment classifications. It is well documented that
containment, safety, and security are generally prioritized in jail and prison classifications (Alexander, 1982; Glaser, 1987). Thus, administrative and management goals are prioritized over goals of inmate rights, equity, fairness, or least restrictive custody goals. These policy priorities lead to a lack of balance by classification systems that are simultaneously overly restrictive and also insensitive to the rehabilitation needs of offenders.

The Politics of Classification

Jail administrators must resist external pressure toward extreme policies. In both small and large communities, classification is vulnerable to political pressures from external groups. These groups (e.g., Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, MADD; prisoners’ rights groups; victims’ rights groups; politically oriented judges) often hold extreme positions or liberal or highly restrictive orientations. Pressure from victims’ rights groups, conservative politicians, hard line judges, and so on may produce over restrictive classifications; pressure from fiscal cutbacks or inmates’ rights groups may produce liberal systems that are vulnerable to under classification errors. If managers in small jails fail to resist such groups and their pressures, they may adopt extreme restrictive or liberal classification procedures that fail to align with their missions.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the many goals supported by classification in small and large jails. Administrators must be aware that classification is a fundamental mechanism by which to support the achievement of multiple overlapping and often politically opposing goals. Without this awareness they may ignore classification and may implicitly sabotage it by failing to provide sufficient resources (e.g., adequate staffing, training, and supervision).

The mission of the small jail and its policy goals is the starting point for the selection and design of classification methods. Classification procedures must achieve a balance among these goals. Leadership in any small jail should provide a carefully constructed and clear mission statement to indicate the main policy priorities of
the jail. Only then does it become possible to assess whether the jail's classification procedures are aligned with policy directives. Jail classification can either support or sabotage these policy goals.

Local political pressure groups and key stakeholders can influence the priorities and style of a jail's classification system. Because classification is a mechanism for implementing jail policy, it is inevitably subject to political pressure. Thus, classification procedures even in small jails must be well aligned with the jail’s mission and also must be politically and professionally acceptable in balancing legitimate but competing policy goals. Successful implementation always requires achieving a buy-in by critical local stakeholders. Chapter 4 examines how the goals and policies of the small jail can be achieved by careful design of objective classification procedures that are in compliance with legal and professional principles of classification.
Developing Political Support

At the earliest stages—before implementing a new classification system—some important background information is critical. This information is useful for building political support, obtaining resources, and for the technical task of adopting a classification system to meet the needs of the jail.

First, consider who recognized that the current classification system was inadequate. Relevant political issues can be revealed by considering who called attention to the problem and who remained complacent (or blind) to deficiencies of the current system. This is critical in jails because if top administrators and those who control budgets and staffing do not recognize problems in the current system, they are unlikely to support a project to upgrade or improve the system. An early challenge in the assessment process is to educate personnel about the problems, deficiencies, and risks to the jail that are posed by the current classification system. The self-assessment exercises in this chapter may be a useful aid in this process.

In many jails, classification becomes a problem not because the line staff or management saw anything wrong with current practices, but because of external pressure resulting from a violation of state or national standards (e.g., as with litigation by inmates, court orders, and consent decrees). Complacency may stem from several sources, and the administrator should be aware of the factors behind the apathy or complacency of those who see no problems. Complacency may arise for several reasons:

- Insufficient knowledge or training in classification;
- Absence of performance data on the current classification;
• Thoughtlessness, laziness or burnout, or desire to maintain the status quo;
• Distractions caused by other pressing events;
• Fear of change, fear of involvement (CYA orientation);
• Powerlessness due to poor technical skills or low position in the bureaucratic hierarchy; and
• Tendency to operate continuously in “fire-fighting” mode.

Thus, the attitudes of the main actors—managers and line level staff—need to be considered and several questions answered: Who decided to do something? Who did not care? Who remained uninvolved? Who failed to recognize the problem?

If uninvolved managers or staff are in critical positions, an important task is to sensitize them to the existing problem(s), justify the importance of a new classification system, and obtain their buy-in to the process. Successful implementation demands that critically placed managers and staff recognize the deficiencies and actively agree that there is a need for change.
### EXERCISE: IDENTIFYING DEFICIENCIES IN THE CURRENT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUES</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>COMMENTS/ Who Identified the Problem?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the current system subjective or objective?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Subjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are any goals or standards being violated by the current system?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are line staff requirements being met by current system?</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are management requirements being met by current system?</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are legal requirements being met by current system?</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the information needs of the jail being met by current system?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there problems in the jail that could be better addressed with a new classification? (e.g., crowding, discipline, public safety)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is current system being used consistently and driving management decisions? (or is it being ignored)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the current system accepted/liked by staff?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the current system seem to be making correct classification decisions?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are routine reports prepared to profile classification-related information for staff and administration?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there other deficiencies with the current system?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Understanding and Establishing New Classification Goals

Vagueness regarding what jail managers want to achieve from their classification system is a problem. Too frequently objective classification systems are introduced with
only vague specification of purposes and a poor understanding of its relationship to other organizational goals of the jail and local criminal justice systems.

Discussions in this phase should develop goals for the new classification system. A compilation of current deficiencies as seen by line and management personnel and external stakeholders (courts, inmates, citizens, and local criminal justice agencies) should be conducted. This identifies the main weaknesses of the current classification system, which should be linked to an analysis of its technical deficiencies. Questions to consider include

- What goals and standards are being violated by the current classification system?
- What line staff requirements are not being met?
- What management requirements are not being met?
- What requirements of the legal system are not being met?
- What information needs are not being met by the present system?
- What management problems are facing the jail (e.g., overcrowding, housing problems, discipline, and safety)?

Answers to these questions are usually determined by interviewing the various stakeholders and users of the classification system to determining needs, deficits, problems, and goals. Substantial disagreement among stakeholders on prioritization of classification goals and policies may emerge. The deficiencies and goals should be discussed in meetings with staff and other stakeholders.

The exercise on the following page provides a sample questionnaire that can be used to gather information about the perceived deficiencies or adequacy of the current classification system as part of the process of considering a change.

**Communicating a Clear Vision of What is To Be Accomplished**

Top managers must communicate a clear vision of what is to be accomplished by any new classification system. This includes informing staff of the goals, policies, and benefits that will be enabled or enhanced by the new system. All key players and
stakeholders should understand this vision and share commitment to it. This vision of classification goals coordinates the whole effort. It guides choices of method and motivates actions and the adoption of new policies and organizational structures. It provides justification and rationale for new procedures and needed resources. Both line and management staff need to understand the need for change and the expected benefits of the new classification system. The rationale that supports the change must be communicated to staff by top management to help ensure buy-in and thereby pave the way to acceptance and support during the transition to a new system.

**Obtaining Consensus on Vision by Drafting an Impact Statement**

Unfortunately, jail administrators may lack a strategic vision of the role and mission of classification. One tactic for overcoming this problem is for core managers to discuss or draft an impact statement that clarifies how the new classification system will strengthen the main correctional goals of the jail. In this way, administrators, managers, and line staff can develop a clearer appreciation of the need for a new system and its benefits. This promotes useful dialogue between administrators and line users. If a jail has a policy formation group, the impact statement may be integrated into written policy to achieve consensus (see Chapter 6).

Most organizations resist change, and jails are no exception. Change is only accepted if it is tied to necessary and desirable improvements in jail functioning. The impact statement should emphasize general organizational improvement and should link classification to specific correctional goals. Expected improvements give a basic justification for new procedures. This improvement theme is critical in preventing conflict between organizational units that may be affected in different ways by new procedures. All units affected by changes in classification need to understand the goals of overall institutional improvement.

Awareness of current deficiencies, new goals, and expected benefits will usually strengthen the motivation to persevere with implementation and overcome any complacency or resistance among staff. Continued encouragement from top administrators and reminders of benefits are required in all implementation phases.
Obtaining Consensus on Goals

The goals of the new classification system should be identified prior to the selection and implementation of a classification instrument. Explicit goals will progressively become clarified during pre-implementation tasks discussed above. Educating and training staff on principles of correct classification, using their views of current deficits, determining their information needs, and incorporating their impact statement contribute to drafting clear goals and expectations for a new classification system.

The multiplicity of classification goals in jails and prioritization of them is a common problem (Alexander, 1983; Fowler & Rans, 1983). A review of classification goals in jails is provided by Brennan (1987b). The following briefly lists some of these goals.

Goals of Concern to Jail Staff and Administrators

- Ensure efficient use of jail resources (housing space, staff, inmate programs) by avoiding over- or under classification; minimize waste of jail resources;
- Classify accurately, efficiently, and speedily;
- Achieve orderly operations and discipline using appropriate separation and housing;
- Minimize inmate-to-inmate conflict, violence, and victimization;
- Ensure documentation and legal protection for decisions or actions of jail staff (proof of validity of officer decisions and actions);
- Comply with legal requirements regarding classification procedures, due process, and legitimate inmate's rights;
- Ensure staff safety by correct classification of dangerous inmates;
- Monitor changes in the inmate population using classification data;
- Ensure accurate and timely communication and coordination in the facility;
- Provide data for budgeting, program planning, and resource allocations; and
• Provide data for monitoring the achievement of various policy objectives.

**Goals of Concern to Inmates**

• Ensure protection and safety;
• Ensure separation of violent inmates from victim types;
• Provide equity, fairness, and consistency;
• Allow inmate participation and access to information;
• Provide access to appropriate treatments and identification of needs; and
• Ensure incarceration at the least restrictive custody level.

**Goals of Concern to Citizens**

• Ensure public safety using valid classification and security arrangements;
• Ensure cost efficiency by incarcerating at least restrictive custody level;
• Enhance rehabilitation by minimizing isolation from the community and by re-integration consistent with public safety;
• Enhance rehabilitation and reduce future crime by correct classification of inmate needs and provision of appropriate treatments; and
• Reduce criminal "contamination" by valid separation of habitual criminals from younger, inexperienced youth.

**Goals of Concern to the Local Criminal Justice System**

• Provide for efficient use of limited jail resources;
• Promote cost effectiveness;
• Ensure identification of inmate subpopulations for alternative management options; and
• Encourage inmate involvement in various treatment programs (e.g., behavior modification).
The following exercise is designed to assist jail administrators in identifying important goals and expectations of a new or refined classification system. Check the classification-related goals that are important to each stakeholder group, and then list the primary expected benefits for each group.

EXERCISE: IDENTIFYING GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Goals (check all that apply)</th>
<th>Expected benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jail Staff</td>
<td>θ Classify accurately &amp; efficiently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Achieve orderly operations &amp; discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Minimize inmate conflict &amp; victimization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Maximize staff safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Ensure good communication and coordination between staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Monitor changes in inmate security profiles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>θ Efficient use of staff time and resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Minimize liability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Comply with legal requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Provide data for monitoring policy objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Provide data for budgeting, program, &amp; facility planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Reduce crowding thru identification of inmate subpopulations for alternative management options</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmates</td>
<td>θ Protection and safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Equity, fairness, &amp; consistency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Improve access to programs &amp; privileges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Incarceration at the least restrictive custody level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>θ Ensure public safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Ensure cost efficiency and avoid waste</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Minimize liability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Reduce criminal contamination between first-time and repeat offenders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Enhance rehabilitation thru increased access to programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Criminal Justice System</td>
<td>θ Efficient use of limited jail beds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Cost effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Identification of inmate sub-populations for alternative management options</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>θ Encouragement and coordination of inmate involvement in treatment programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Avoiding Delegating Unresolved Goal Conflicts to Line Staff

As discussed in Chapter 2, many correctional goals conflict with each other. The most serious conflict is between inmate goals (least restrictive custody; access to
treatment and community) versus security and law enforcement goals (security and public safety, etc). This conflict often remains unresolved and is passed downward—by default—to line-level staff without the provision of explicit classification guidelines to resolve the conflict. Line staff simply resolve this issue by classifying in a way that minimizes their personal accountability and caters to personal biases. A consequence of this approach is systematic over classification. This creates enormous waste and undermines jail efficiency and the classification system. Policy conflict and prioritization should be squarely faced by management and not passed downward to line staff.

**Classification, Direct Supervision, and Small Jails**

Classification plays a less critical role in determining housing decisions in small jails because of their minimal number of cells; that is, a jail may only have three cells and thus may be forced to mix security levels to some degree. All of the other goals of classification, however, remain just as relevant as for larger jails.

With the recent trend toward direct supervision jails, the question of the potential role of inmate classification within such a model is frequently being asked. In traditional jails (first-generation linear design and second-generation indirect surveillance jails), the role of objective inmate classification systems has been quite well defined. An inmate classification system can help identify those inmates who present a grave threat to themselves, staff, other inmates, or the community. Subsequently, such inmates can be assigned appropriate housing and supervision relative to the degree of assessed risk.

Frequently, in traditional jails, this results in maximum, medium, and minimum security inmates being housed separately from each other, if the facility design and cell space permit. This has been demonstrated to work well for the management of the general inmate population for these two traditional jail designs. We question however whether inmate classification can or should play the same or similar role in a direct supervision or very small jail. For instance, what is the potential impact of classification on overcrowding? What role can classification play in decisions to board inmates in other correctional facilities? Can classification help to identify direct supervision inmates eligible for work release, non-secure trustee positions, or minimum-security housing? To address these questions, consider them in relation to the four primary functions of
classification previously discussed, that is, determining factors of inmate/staff safety, equity/fairness/consistency, public safety and community-based programs, and correctional facility management and planning.

**Inmate/Staff Safety**

One of the primary functions of jail/inmate classification systems is to assist jail administrators and staff in assessing and identifying the dangerous or potential problem inmate with the purpose of making appropriate housing, supervision, medical care, and treatment decisions. In most jails this assessment should occur at two distinct stages of incarceration: (1) at booking or intake for temporary management decisions, and (2) before the inmate is moved to general population for longer-term housing assignment, needs assessment, and program referral. With respect to the initial classification stage at intake (assessment of various factors including medical treatment needs, suicide risk, appropriate temporary housing, etc.), the function of inmate classification remains essentially the same for all supervision models.

At the second stage of classifying the longer-term inmate to general housing, the function of inmate classification may be different for direct supervision or very small jails. Although the issue of identifying high-risk or problem inmates (i.e., assaultive, suicidal, mentally ill) and separating them from the general population is the same for both models, the difference may be found in the housing policy of the facility. Frequently, direct supervision or very small jails adopt a housing policy of mixing security levels within the same housing unit. In such instances, the application of classification is not critical to housing assignments. Some jails of this type, on the other hand, may choose the housing policy of separating *minimum* custody level inmates to take advantage of less expensive housing options and reduced staff supervision levels while still operating under the direct supervision model. Obviously, classification has a useful role to play in this circumstance (see Chapter 7).

Classification for security and placement decisions is the same for traditional and direct supervision models; the difference lies chiefly in the relationship between the assigned security levels of inmates and the housing policies that a specific facility chooses to meet its inmate separation objectives.
Equity/Fairness/Consistency

An objective inmate classification system, regardless of the type of supervision/facility model, provides for equity, fairness, and consistency in managing the general inmate population. In principle, all inmates should be classified by the same objective criteria supported by specific policies and procedures, including designated housing areas, decision guidelines, and program eligibility criteria. This provides reasoning to support the decision-making process and eliminates arbitrary decisions. For example, the various security level classifications should define and determine an appropriate range of eligibility for certain programs and privileges (e.g., day release or trustee positions for minimum security inmates). This also supports a system of behavior modification by providing incentives for the inmate to address assessed needs and to promote positive behavior consistent with the direct supervision philosophy or the goals of the facility.

A necessary component for this application of classification is a regular periodic review of inmates’ current security level classification. This provides structure for monitoring and tracking inmate behavior and allows the inmate to progress to lower (i.e., increased eligibility for programs, housing, special privileges) or higher security levels (i.e., restricted housing, programming). Obviously, factors such as the offenses for which they are incarcerated may limit the security level that inmates may achieve.

Regardless of the supervision model used, the principle of equity/fairness/consistency is very important and provides a base from which management decisions are made.

Public Safety and Community-based Alternative Programs

Regardless of whether a jail is operating under traditional or direct supervision models, and regardless of the degree to which classification determines housing decisions, classification is perhaps most instrumental in its potential application to alleviating overcrowding, identifying inmates for community-based correction programs, and protecting public safety.
With the mounting problem of overcrowding, jail administrators and local criminal justice policymakers are increasingly faced with the question of which offenders are going to take up the jail's limited space and resources. This problem can be addressed either at the front end, in determining punishment options at sentencing, or at the back end, in determining which sentenced inmates may qualify to serve a portion of their jail term and then be recommended for early release into community-based programs such as community service work, residential treatment, or intensive probation. To facilitate this process, a good classification system, regardless of the supervision model, should help to identify those inmates who have the best chance to complete successfully the community-based sanction with emphasis on minimizing the risk to public safety (see Chapter 10).

Efficient Facility Planning and Management

Classification and the inmate data it provides in conjunction with other important booking and release information can play a significant role in facility planning and management. Knowing who is in the jail, offense type, crime classification, length of stay, security classification profile, and so on (in short, an objective inmate population profile) is critical to the jail management process. An obvious application includes assistance in identifying the type of facility construction (minimum to maximum) needed to handle the local offender population. Typically, new jail construction overbuilds in terms of costly maximum-security cell space, especially in rural areas, relative to the typical security profile of the inmate population in that area. Inmate data derived from classification, if available during the planning process for new jail construction or renovation, can significantly reduce expenses by providing a wider range of options of housing, including direct supervision.

As previously mentioned, the inmate information provided by a good classification and management information system (MIS) can identify specific subpopulations within the overall inmate population for which specific management/program options may be considered.

The application of a good inmate classification system in traditional jails suggests that these functions are similar for both traditional jail supervision models and the direct
supervision model, with one important distinction. The primary difference in the application of a good objective classification system is the role of classification in determining housing decisions, which remain the individual choice of the jail administration. The primary factor for determining whether an inmate in a direct supervision or very small jail is housed in a group pod or in a segregated area is in assessing his institutional behavior, special needs, and ability to get along with other inmates. All other basic applications of inmate classification hold similar potential in facilitating efficient and cost-effective jail management and planning for direct supervision and very small jails.

Conclusion

Implementing change in a jail is difficult. To help facilitate the process of introducing a new classification system, it is critical that security staff and other stakeholders understand the deficiencies of the old system. In the process, goals of the new system need to be identified. This assists in building buy-in, support, and commitment as the change is implemented. If staff, administrators, and other stakeholders understand the ways in which the current process is lacking and if they see the potential pay-offs of the new system, the chance for successful implementation will be greatly enhanced.
CHAPTER 4

CLASSIFICATION METHODS: PROCEDURES AND TRAINING

This chapter addresses methods of jail classification (OJC) that may be effective in a small jail and have been widely used and tested. The two main OJC procedures described in this chapter, additive point scale and decision tree, have been implemented successfully in many small jails. Inexpensive software is also available for both procedures that may fit the budgets of small jails. Both methods have been taught for several years at NIC classification workshops. Finally, much evidence has accumulated suggesting that these methods are practical, easy to use, and efficient.

Goals of This Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to provide training and instruction to help staff

- Understand the logic and methods of these OJC procedures,
- Know how to score—manually or by computer—the classification instruments,
- Understand the situations and reasons in which OJC procedures may be overridden and the types of overrides that may be needed,
- Understand legal requirements and other performance criteria met by objective classification methods,
- Understand the reclassification process and the emphasis given to current behavior when changing custody levels,
- Acquire knowledge needed to work through several case exercises to develop skills in classification using both points and decision tree methods.

Important Risks for Small Jail Classification

Classification systems focus on several different kinds of risks. These different risks are described below. The different risks may require the collection of different risk factors to assess an offender for each risk. For example, public safety risk, internal institutional risk, and suicide risk are all different in their selection of risk factors. The
separation of community risk (public safety) from institutional risk is a feature of many recent jail and prison classification systems. **The primary purpose of custody classification is to determine supervision level and treatment inside the jail, whereas the primary purpose of security classification is to assess public risk outside the jail and the provision of appropriate perimeter security.**

The following section reviews the different risks that jail classifications must assess. All of these are equally relevant for both large and small jails.

**Public Safety Risks**

The concern here is with general danger to the public. Hardcore and violent criminal recidivists (e.g., those who have perpetrated wanton or “purposeless” violence on unresisting victims), habitual serious criminals, and high escape risks fall in this category. Research generally suggests that less than 20% of prisoners entering jail fall in this category, although different measurement approaches and different jurisdictions may produce slightly differing percentages. Security classifications and perimeter arrangements are based on the need to restrict such inmates and prevent escapes.

**Custodial Risk**

This risk focuses on disorder and threats to the safety of staff or other inmates inside the facility. Certain inmates may have difficulty adjusting to any correctional facility or may disrupt the orderly conduct of the jail. Custody classifications often incorporate past and present disciplinary assessments and ratings of relationships to staff and inmates, whereas criminal history and street behavior may be less highly weighted especially for reclassification purposes.

**Systems Risk (Political and Public Relations Risk)**

Alexander (1982) described a “systems risk” that identifies inmates who, although they may not constitute serious security or custody risks, nevertheless have high visibility or notoriety and may thus evoke extreme public concern. Allaying public anxiety demands that such inmates be placed in high security. If this is not done the institution may be perceived as irresponsible.
Suicide or Self-injury Risk

This risk requires careful assessment in both prisons and jails using different risk factors than those used for security or custody dimensions. The selection of risk factors for this focuses on prior attempts at suicide, current depression or shame, recent losses of relationships or jobs, recent stressors, current suicidal ideation, and so on.

Protective Custody

This risk identifies inmates with a high potential for being victimized by others. At intake, inmates are usually questioned regarding the existence of known enemies and other potential victimizers. Inmates generally acknowledge such risks. Offenders who may be placed into protective custody include rival gang members, child molesters, witness conflicts, certain homosexuals, and so on.

An acceptable classification system for a small jail must address all of the above risks.

Principles That Drive Classification Methods in Small Jails

Several standards or principles have been proposed to guide the development of jail classifications. These apply equally to jails of any size. NIC principles for classification (Solomon, 1980), ACA Standards, and existing case law focusing on classification issues have provided major guidance for this task. For example, a first step in any offender classification is to select relevant risk factors. Solomon suggested that classification risk factors should be complete, verified, standardized, valid, reliable, and objective. Current case law on offender classification affirms these standards and adds that classification factors should also be relevant and comprehensive so that no relevant factors are systematically excluded. The NIC principles also suggest that jail classification must include screening for special needs.

Because jail administrators and staff must understand the implications of these principles, we offer brief comments below on these requirements.
Objective and Verifiable

The data used to classify an offender should ideally be both verifiable and observable. This usually requires that risk factors are behaviorally based, easily observed and recorded, and carefully documented. Explicit behaviors and legal actions (e.g., age at first arrest, use of a weapon, felony convictions, behavioral infractions) are preferred over psychological factors (e.g., intentions, attitudes, feelings) for this process. The latter are more vulnerable to inconsistent and unreliable scoring. Clearly, modern psychometrics procedures have been developed to score reliably and objectively many psychological and sociological factors (e.g., anger/hostility, impulsivity, psychopathic tendency). However in small jails, this more complex measurement is usually avoided. Most jails have a preference for directly observable and verifiable data. This explains the primary focus of jail classification on simple behavioral and legal factors as a basis for classification.

Reliable and Consistent

Reliable and consistent measurement is a foundation of good classification. Consistent classification, for example, is impossible without reliable measures. Every classification purpose is crippled by unreliable factors because they produce inconsistent decisions. Reliable measurement has been important since antiquity: “A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is a delight” (Proverbs 11:1, cited in Duncan, 1984)

Reliability of classification has several components. First, the variables used by the classification must be measured reliably. Second, procedures for assigning offenders to the correct class can also suffer from unreliability; that is, low inter-rater agreement may occur when different officers classify highly similar cases into different security levels. This is a major challenge to all jails. Third, if training and supervision are inadequate, then poorly trained staff may introduce error and inconsistency into their classification decisions.

An irony is that although consistency and reliability have long been major policy goals (Solomon, 1980), most designers of jail classifications have largely ignored
assessing the reliability of correctional classification procedures (Brennan, 1987a, 1993; Wright, Clear, & Dickson, 1984).

**Validated and Relevant Factors**

A classification risk factor is valid to the degree that it is logically and empirically related to the purposes of the classification. Thus, in jails there is a strong use of past violence when classifying offenders for the broad concept of dangerousness of risk. This practice is well supported as much academic research has shown that specific past behaviors are often the best predictors of that same behavior in the future. For example, one of the best predictors of future arrest is the number of prior arrests. The practice of using past behaviors to predict future behaviors has dominated jail classifications.

The predictive validity of a classification indicates whether the classification can predict important outcomes or risk. Specifically, we need to know whether the classification levels (e.g., low, medium, high) truly or significantly differ on the important risk behaviors. Predictive classifications are ubiquitous in jails (risks of violence, escape, disciplinary infractions, recidivism, etc.).

On the other hand, many jail classifications avoid a predictive claim and adopt a strategy of policy-guided classifications. Such policy-guided jail classifications do not aspire to predictive ability, and their alternative purpose is to be descriptively accurate, to guide treatment, or to separate certain kinds of inmates from each other (e.g., first-time detainees from hard core repeat offenders).

**Comprehensive Coverage of Risk Factors**

Another key requirement of a jail classification is adequate coverage of the relevant and important factors. This requirement is equivalent to the scientific concept of content validity. Basically, the content validity of a classification addresses whether the selected factors are adequate for the stated purposes of the system. Unfortunately many jail classifications are extremely brief and oversimplified and do not adequately cover the key information.
There are many reasons for oversimplification and extreme brevity, including time pressures, confusion and ambiguity over purposes, weak theoretical guidance, and weak background research (Brennan, 1987a; Sechrest, 1987). If key risk factors are missing, then the validity and usefulness of any classification will degenerate.

**Special Needs**

Another recommendation is that a jail classification should screen and evaluate inmates who are management problems or who have special needs. Virtually all jail systems try to meet this requirement, which emphasizes the need for procedures to identify prisoners who have special needs (e.g., medical, mental health, protective custody needs) and to provide for these needs. The two systems included with this manual consider a large number of special needs as assessed by the initial screening forms.

**Matching Offenders with Programs**

Among the additional principles listed by Solomon (1980) is the need to match each detainee carefully to appropriate programs. The assessment of the special needs of prisoners is the first step in linking an offender to appropriate treatments and programs. However, for a variety of reasons many jails have difficulty with this matching process. In small jails the most obvious reason is that the complete range of treatment resources or qualified staff may be unavailable. Research has demonstrated that many inmates who are eligible for certain services (e.g., psychiatric services) do not receive them.

**Appropriate and careful classification and assessment is, however, the first step in matching of inmates to treatment. This requires identification of needs followed by referral to appropriate programs.** The two objective jail classification systems described later in this manual follow this principle by including a systematic needs assessment. Even if the needed treatment resources are unavailable, such assessment may be helpful to a small jail by indicating gaps in program resources.
Efficiency and Ease of Use

Efficiency is another key requirement in most small jails, especially those with limited staff resources. A classification method will fail if it is too cumbersome, difficult to use, or difficult to learn. If a system is excessively difficult to use or requires too much time to complete, then staff acceptance, which is critical for successful implementation, becomes a critical issue. An excessively cumbersome system is unlikely to be accepted. Thus, this guideline asserts that classification should be economical and avoid excessive demands on the time and resources of a facility.

Many jails have responded to this requirement by streamlining and abbreviating their classification systems until they are excessively simplified. This can drastically decrease the validity and reliability of the system so that many errors of classification will occur. The drive for efficiency may work at cross-purposes with the requirements of comprehensiveness and validity. This tradeoff is especially acute in small jails where there is limited staff, limited time, and often few treatment resources. The two systems described in this chapter are fairly simplified but at the same time retain good coverage of most of the critical risk factors.

Limiting or Constraint of Staff Discretion

A profound requirement of any jail classification is constraint of staff subjectivity. Bias and subjectivity can distort classification decisions if staff discretionary judgments dominate the process. Consistency in classification decision-making can be lost if the discretionary judgments of staff are allowed to dominate classification decisions. Supervisory review and the requirement to document the reasons for any discretionary override usually constrain the unfettered discretion of staff. The current use of objective classifications (additive point or decision tree systems) does not completely eliminate discretion, but in conjunction with supervisory review and documented reasons, tends to control and structure the use of discretionary overrides in a productive manner.
Prisoner Involvement in the Classification Process

This principle, although often seen as onerous by jail staff, in fact, provides useful feedback and quality control on the validity and defensibility of the total process. Traditionally prisoners were given little opportunity to understand, participate, or appeal the decision process. However, the emergence of objective methods has transformed classification into an explicit, coherent, and understandable procedure. This, in turn, allows inmates to evaluate the accuracy and correctness of the risk factors and to understand and participate in the decision processes.

Systematic Reclassification

Another essential standard is periodic reclassification of detainees. Jails vary according to the timing and frequency of reclassification. Reclassification is arguably more appropriate in prisons because of longer sentences. In jails, where a large percentage of inmates are released within days, the necessity for elaborate reclassification procedures is often questioned. Yet most jails have many inmates who stay a year or more, making reclassification crucial.

Least Restrictive Housing

This principle requires the placement of inmates into custody and security levels consistent with their actual risk to the orderly management of the facility and the safety of the community. For example, it is both expensive and unnecessary to house minimum custody inmates in a maximum custody setting. If 40% of inmates are minimum custody, but 100% of the facility is built and staffed for maximum custody inmates, this amounts to a systematic waste of valuable high security resources. The principle of least restrictive housing attempts to ensure humane treatment of inmates as well as more efficient use of the physical plant and human resources of the jail.

Information Sources: Multiple Sources and Cross-verification

High quality information is critical to good classification. The data sources for inmate classification are similar in jails of all sizes. The section below shows the data sources that are most often used to gather the information for inmate classification. Access to the full range of these data sources is sometimes limited in the smallest jails.
A danger is that any gaps in data may result in classification errors. Cross-verification of data across sources is always prudent and usually produces higher quality decisions.

The following represent the major data sources for most jails.

**Official Criminal Histories**

Criminal history data from state, local, and national levels is essential to offender classification. However, although criminal history data is generally improving across the nation, it still may suffer from problems of under-reporting, data entry errors, and gaps. A particular problem is that conviction data may not be present for all arrests. This data should be selectively cross-verified with the inmate during the face-to-face interview.

**Prior Incarceration Disciplinary Record**

Previous disciplinary records are a critical source of data. The quality of disciplinary histories is highly variable across jails and depends on the vigilance with which this data were collected and entered into the jail’s database. In some cases records are stored in manual files, which makes retrieval of the data very cumbersome.

**Inmate Interview and Inmate Self-Report**

The inmate interview is a quick and efficient approach to collecting and clarifying details of most relevant background factors. Lying and under-reporting is a danger, although a good interviewer is usually able to evoke high quality data. Interview skills are thus critical, and we detail some of these later in this section.

**Arrest Reports**

Arrest reports can provide much useful information. Notes on assaultive behavior, gang membership, special “keep separates”, and so forth, are often provided in the arrest report.
Court Commitment Papers

Court commitment papers may provide much additional background on the current offense, aggravating and mitigating factors, and related situations that may help the classification officer understand the case more fully. These also will clarify the legal status and specific charges of the offender.

Other Institutional Data

Additional information may be available from other county, state, federal agencies. In some cases agencies such as social services, probation, welfare and housing departments, and so on may provide useful data that will provide clues to understanding the social, educational, and work history of the person.

Principles of the Face-to-face Classification Interview

The classification interview is critical to gathering and verifying classification information. In many small jails there is a tendency to ignore or undervalue the interview as a key source of critical information. In such jails the classification may degenerate into a paper-driven process. Critical risk factors remain unverified, aggregating and mitigating factors are never identified, and many classification errors occur.

The classification interview is probably the single most important component of the data collection process. We suggest that the interview should generally be at least a 5-minute discussion and in many cases longer. From the perspective of the small jail with limited staff, the interview (if carried out effectively) can be a very efficient way to collect and cross-verify data and examine inconsistencies in the official records. It allows substantial cross-verification against other data sources, and it may be the only way to identify mitigating or aggravating circumstances. These can be explored and clarified in an open-ended manner during these interviews.

Streamlining and Minimizing the Interview

Many jails minimize the time spent doing the interview. They streamline or condense it into a routine abbreviated question-and-answer process, often lasting two minutes or less. We have witnessed many jail staff conducting the face-to-face interview in this manner without even looking at the detainee and failing to ask any probing or
clarification questions. This is a loss of the opportunity to use the interview in a productive manner.

The following sections review principles and best practices for the classification interview.

**Adopting a Serious and Purposeful but Friendly Tone**

Classification interviews should be conducted in private in an organized, sit-down, face-to-face manner. The setting should be such that the inmates consider it to be an important, serious interview being conducted by a concerned official. Privacy and confidentiality are important: other inmates should not be able to hear the interview. The officer’s demeanor should be friendly, nonjudgmental, and courteous. Interrogation style should be avoided.

**Pre-interview Collecting of Official Records**

Classification interviews should take place after the classification officer has assembled the inmate’s current and prior records and has become familiar with them. This should provide the officer with a detailed background on the inmate’s criminal history so that cross-verification and querying of any ambiguous, evasive, or mitigating/aggravating circumstances can occur.

**Probing and Clarifying Ambiguities**

The classification officer should use the interview to clarify any ambiguities or gaps in the inmate’s file or prior record. For instance, the officer should probe to discover whether there are any keep-separate orders that are still valid or whether the reasons for a past suicide precaution still exist. Another area for discovery is whether the inmate knows what happened on charges for which dispositions have not been documented. It is critical to the formulation of an accurate classification to document such factors and resolve ambiguities.
Following Up on Problems

There should be formal referral protocols in place so that proper follow up will occur for any problems discovered during the interview. The classification officer should be prepared to answer any questions posed by the inmate in a helpful manner, solve problems, or refer the inmate to the proper person for such resolution. Interviews should ideally end with the question, “Is there anything else I can help you with?”

Developing Active Listening Skills

Classification officers should practice active listening. Good eye contact, attention to the inmate, a friendly demeanor, and active listening can often combine to evoke much information from the inmate. The inmate should not think that the officer is paying more attention to data entry than to the inmate’s problems. Officers should give the impression that they care about what the inmate is saying.

Explaining the Jail’s Philosophy of Good/Bad Behavior

The classification interview is a good opportunity to orient the inmate to the fact that OJC is behavior-driven and that behavior directly impacts living conditions. Rewards, privileges, and sanctions in many instances will depend on following the rules and adopting good behavioral patterns. The officer may explain the jail policy regarding reclassification to higher or lower custody levels and how such reclassifications are directly linked to good or bad behaviors and rule-breaking.

Developing Interviewers’ Background and Skills

Staff responsible for conducting the classification interview ideally should be well trained in interviewing skills, experienced, and a “people-oriented” person. The staff should know departmental policy and procedures, the court system, the extradition process, the prison system, local probation practices, and any other areas that may impact the inmate’s concerns. This broad range of knowledge is invaluable in providing a basis for answering inmates’ questions, orienting the inmate to the jail, and ensuring high quality data to drive the classification.
The Sequence of Classification in Small Jails

Each small jail may have a different approach to the sequencing and timing of classification activities. This timing and sequencing partly depend on local policy, local jail architecture, law enforcement needs, and on the amount of temporary holding space. Small jails that do not have sufficient initial temporary holding cells are forced to classify offenders almost as soon as they enter the jail. However, if such space is available, detainees can be temporarily housed in the initial holding area for up to 48 or even 72 hours before a formal classification is required.

The following paragraphs describe the typical sequencing of classification activities.

Intake Screening/Booking and Initial Triage

At first entry into jail, decisions must be made that involve assessment and screening for several key risk and need factors. This phase is extremely important to the classification process. The following questions may be involved at this step:

- Should we accept this person into the jail?
- Are there any serious or immediate risks or needs that require immediate attention?
- Are there any alerts from previous incarcerations?
- What temporary housing or supervision arrangements are required?
- What (if any) immediate notifications or referrals to other services are needed?

Special needs assessment in particular (e.g. medical, protective custody) is often conducted at this initial entry into the jail, with further iterations of needs assessment occurring later during the initial classification process.

Two examples of intake/booking forms are included with the packages of forms at the end of this chapter.
Initial or Primary Classification

Within a specific time period (typically 24 to 72 hours) established by policy, the newly admitted inmate should be provided with an initial classification.

This classification process involves the integration of all previously gathered booking data, medical, mental health, education, demographic, and criminal history information using a face-to-face interview. The data from this interview are then objectively scored using a standardized classification instrument to determine permanent housing and custody status. This process may also involve additional needs screening.

Two examples of these initial classification forms (decision tree and point additive scale) are included at the end of this chapter.

Reclassification

Reclassification is an important component that is used to adjust inmates’ custody or housing status based on behavior or as a result of a change in legal status. It is especially important for long-term inmates. Classification reviews may occur on a specific time schedule (e.g., every 40 days) or in response to a critical incident or event. The periodic reassessment of housing and custody status of an incarcerated person is thus driven by time and events.

Many jails avoid systematic or periodic classification reviews because they feel that this creates extra work and because the length of stay of so many inmates is fairly short. However, when it is understood that these classification reviews (e.g., every 30 or 40 days) are only required for the small percentage of inmates who remain in jail longer than this time period, the actual amount of extra work is not excessive. The benefits in terms of motivating the longer-term inmate to behave well, to improve their status, to obtain better privileges, and so forth, are considerable.

Reclassification focuses on all behavioral and event data that may impact housing, programs, and release status. Reclassification typically requires a face-to-face interview to examine the inmate’s behavior during the time period, verify data, and
communicate to the inmate the basis for any change in custody. Reclassification also allows staff discretionary override that may deviate from the formal classification instrument. Overrides must be well justified if they result in a status change.

The two approaches (additive points and decision tree) used as reclassification instruments are included in the packages of forms at the end of this chapter. These materials include definitions for each question and descriptions of the processes involved.

**Needs Assessment**

Another key function of classification is needs assessment, which is used to guide inmates’ treatment plans. This actually begins at intake/booking with its focus on suicide risk and medical and mental health needs. However, additional needs assessments are required to guide longer-term treatment programming. Longer-term programming may be minimized in importance in many small jails due to a short length of stay or the absence of treatment resources. However, treatment and rehabilitation efforts remain important policy goals in jails of any size and should not be casually ignored. **The collection of needs assessment data, in fact, may be very useful to the small jail administrator in both documenting that these the needs exist and in justifying the request for treatment resources.** Additional needs assessment also typically occurs during the initial classification interview using special forms. A needs assessment form is included with the package of instruments from NIC (below). We suggest that this is a very useful assessment form if the small jail can provide even a basic level of inmate programs, as it can function as a “feeder” to those programs.

The following discussion addresses several issues and justifications that are relevant to needs assessment and treatment programming in small jails.

- **The danger of warehousing and idleness:** As noted earlier, needs assessment is especially important for inmates with a longer length of stay. Most jails, including small jails, aim to avoid simply warehousing the inmates. Idleness may result in inmate deterioration and disciplinary problems. Inmates who are involved in programs are typically better behaved and controlled. The assessment of special
needs gained at intake screening and subsequently during the initial classification process is therefore used to design a program of treatment for inmates.

- **Limited program resources in small jails**: In small jails, treatment decisions are clearly limited by the specific program opportunities and available resources. This is often unavoidable because of financial constraints and the local availability of various programs.

- **Program eligibility and custody levels**: Classification status can have a powerful impact on program eligibility. Placing the wrong inmate in certain programs may be highly disruptive to the programs and security threats must be carefully considered in the decision. Maximum custody inmates are often restricted in their access to certain categories of programs (e.g., those that involve higher community access). Classification status therefore interacts with needs assessment in determining an inmate’s eligibility for certain programs.

### Review of Classification Methods for Small Jails

This section describes the two jail classification methods that have gained wide usage nationally in both small and large jails over the last decade.

Two separate packages of forms are included at the end of this chapter. The forms packages are examples of national prototypes that may be adopted by a small jail. The major difference between these two sets is that one uses the additive points method for both initial custody classification and reclassification/review, and the second uses the decision tree method. Each of these prototype jail classification systems contain the following forms:

- Initial Screening/Intake Form for use at booking,
- Initial Classification Form for initial custody decisions,
- Reclassification Form for custody changes based on behaviors and events, and
- Needs Assessment Form.
Both of these two systems have been designed for maximum efficiency and are thus compatible with the needs of small jails. They make modest demands on staff time and training and are easy to use manually without a computer (although software for both systems is available).

Additive Point Scale vs. Decision Tree Methods

A major issue for many jails is whether to use the additive point scale or decision tree method. Both have been successfully used. This choice requires a careful review of the relative merits of the two approaches. Users must evaluate the two methods on several criteria and remain sensitive to their particular classification needs. The preferences of jail staff for each approach are often idiosyncratic and no clear guidelines can be given. The following discussion provides pertinent comparative criteria that may be considered when deciding between these two approaches.

Face Validity/Relevance

Decision trees are generally more "face valid" and intuitive than point scales. Thus, if staff resistance, staff training, and staff understanding of the classification system are critical, then a decision tree may be preferred.

Legal Issues

Both methods appear to comply equally with the legal requirements for objective data, rational decision rules, clarity, and logic.

Ease of Use

If the classification is computerized then arithmetic is irrelevant, and there may be little distinction between the two approaches in regard to ease of use. However, if the classification form is completed manually, then the decision tree approach is preferred as it involves no arithmetic and is a little easier to use.

Predictive Accuracy

There is no advantage to either method in terms of accuracy of predictions. Additional research studies must investigate this issue.
**Clarity of Classification Categories**

The decision tree generally produces more final custody categories of greater precision, higher information content, and somewhat less ambiguity in the precise meaning of each category. Point scales produce categories that are a little more ambiguous; that is, an inmate could earn the score for a particular custody level (e.g., medium) in several different ways. Some jails attempt to make the additive point approach more precise by adding “cutting points,” which has the effect of splitting the three broad categories into smaller, more precise categories (e.g., an extra cutting point may be added to split “medium custody” into two separate subcategories, often called upper and lower medium custody levels). However, the standard point system, as given below, adopts the traditional three-way categories of maximum, medium, and minimum. There is no clear consensus among jails as to the merit of such additional subcategories when using the point scale approach.

**Organizational Flexibility**

Each method can produce different numbers of outcome categories. The choice depends on how many categories a jail wishes to use and how they coordinate the number of inmate categories with available bed space. Both methods are flexible and can be tailored to meet the requirements of the particular facility.

**Practice Cases**

At end of this chapter we include trial prototype cases that can be used in training sessions for staff in the use of these forms. Staff are typically productive and (mostly) error free following a brief training session on these systems. These practice cases can be used with both the additive points and decision tree approaches. When trainees have completed each form and reached a score and classification level for each practice case, there should be a class discussion of any disagreements or overrides. Adequate time should be devoted to this exercise to allow participants to raise any questions on items that seem confusing or ambiguous.
Intake Screening/Booking and Initial Triage

As noted above, the booking officer must derive immediate answers to several critical questions at this very early phase. The forms included in the two packages reflect the types of information and key questions typically addressed at this phase. The key questions are

- **Should this person be accepted into the facility?** Intake staff must first decide whether to accept the person. The term “intake triage” is often used to refer to this initial phase regarding custodial acceptance, discovery of serious risks/needs, emergency health care, and immediate referral to a hospital or a mental health organization. Acceptance into jail is often based on information gathered from the transporting authority, the intake screening process, and direct observation.

- **Is there any serious immediate need or risk?** Often particular needs or risks must be addressed immediately. External data sources are also important in addressing this question (e.g., the transporting officer or the arresting officer may have information relevant to custodial care). The jail booking staff must quickly decide how the jail should house, observe, or treat the person during the booking process. This information must be documented and passed on to the next decision point. The initial screening forms give examples of typical medical and suicide questions used at this phase.

- **Are there any alerts from a previous incarceration?** Is there a previous record to indicate that this person has a risk or need status that requires immediate attention? Special alerts must be detected at initial intake/booking and noted at the earliest possible time.

- **What type of temporary housing and supervision should be given?** This decision will be faced for all inmates who are allowed to enter the jail. The above triage questions and special alerts are all relevant to this question.

In addition to addressing the above questions, the initial booking also creates an official institutional record for each inmate. **The screening process requires a series**
of questions that may be answered by the arrestee, officer observation, or documented records. It is advisable to query any data on prior incarcerations and criminal history to assess accuracy and completeness of these data. Booking thus incorporates all relevant information garnered during the triage, organizes this information, and passes it to the next decision point.

**Initial Custody Classification**

We have included two examples of the Primary Classification Forms as listed below:

- The NIC Initial Custody Assessment Form and
- The JICS Decision Tree Initial Classification Form.

These two methods can be freely used in any jail (in manual form) for unlimited classification. They offer prototypical approaches to initial classification that have been carefully researched and revised to meet the needs of jails nationwide. Scoring instructions are provided for the NIC and Northpointe Forms. In each case, the completion of a form requires only a few minutes of an officer’s time. The greater time is required for compilation of official data than for the actual face-to-face interview. The time demands of these two tasks vary substantially across jails according to the status of the jail’s data storage procedures, ease of retrieval, and staff training in interviewing skills.

**Additive Points Initial Custody Form**

The additive points form that is widely used for initial (primary) custody classification is provided at the end of the chapter. The form uses seven risk factors to compute inmates’ custody scores. These are simply scored and added to give a total score. The resulting custody level is indicated on page 2 of the instrument. The custody level that is assigned will depend on the magnitude of the total score (assignment rules are given on page 2).

The form also provides listing of special management concerns that can be checked. These are usually noted during the interview. They may provide a reason to
override the custody level that results from the additive scale. The reason for the override should be provided in writing and then approved or disapproved by a supervisor. The end result is a housing recommendation that is in concert with the inmate’s custody assignment.

The following provides a brief set of definitions to clarify the questions used in the point scale:

4. **Severity of current charges/convictions**: This question assesses the seriousness of the current charge. Points vary from 0 for extremely minor nonviolent charges to 7 points for the most serious and dangerous offenses. A special severity-of-offense scale (given below with the forms) provides a prototypical example of how different offenses may be assigned different points levels. This listing of seriousness is offered as an example and may be modified as needed according to local criminal codes of seriousness. Staff should learn how various offenses are classified into these levels of seriousness.

5. **Serious offense history**: The second question in the point scale shifts attention from the current offense to the most serious convictions in the person’s criminal history. The classification officer should review the formal record of convictions and select the most serious offense. The same seriousness scale as mentioned above is used for this question.

6. **Escape history**: This question addresses whether or not the offender has a record of walk-aways, failure to return, or more serious attempted or successful escapes from a secure setting. Staff must learn to distinguish between serious escapes from a secure facility, as opposed to the less serious walk-aways and failures to return. The former earn 7 points, and the latter are given only 3 points.

7. **Institutional disciplinary history**: The major distinction in this question is between minor infractions that generally do not result in the offender being given any additional points and major infractions that are serious or violent or that require segregation time. The latter score 3 points.
8. **Prior felony convictions**: This question focuses upon the person’s criminal history by tallying up the total number of prior felony convictions. The scoring system ranges from 0 if there have been no such convictions, to 2 points for one felony conviction and 4 points for two or more felony convictions.

9. **Alcohol/drug use**: This question examines several aspects of the offender’s use of alcohol and drugs and whether certain problems have resulted from it. The scale gives 3 points if there has been any violence as a result of drugs or alcohol and 1 point if there have been social, economic, or legal consequences of alcohol or drug abuse.

10. **Social ties and age**: Younger offenders generally have higher rates of disciplinary infractions than older offenders. Therefore, if the person is older than 26 years, one point is subtracted. Similarly, social ties are seen as reflecting more positive social development and more responsibility; therefore, being employed or at school for at least six months prior to the arrest also subtracts one point. Similarly, a stable residence for at least 12 months also subtracts one point.

    **Maximum custody assignment (based on the first three questions)**. After question three has been answered on this initial custody form, an instruction indicates that if the offender’s score totals more than 7 for the first three questions, then the person is immediately assigned to maximum custody. This subsidiary rule has the effect of automatically placing offenders who have serious felony violence or history of escape from a secure facility directly into maximum custody. However, it is important for the classification officer to continue scoring all seven questions and to complete the second page of this form.

    **Special management issues and concerns**. The second page of this form provides a list of special management issues. During the classification interview, the classification officer should ascertain whether any of these factors or problems pertain to this offender. This process may suggest whether the offender should be classified strictly according to the numerical point scale, whether an override should recommend, or whether a special management considerations apply to the offender (e.g., protective...
custody, suicide risk, mental health services). This list may be customized further based upon the specific needs of the jail.

**Practical training in the use of the instrument.** We recommend that a trainer or supervisor lead new staff through a step-by-step completion of the point additive scale using the Initial Custody Assessment Scale form. It is important for the supervisor or trainer to explain and discuss the meanings of each of the seven questions. Formal definitions for all questions are provided below with the relevant instruments.

**Decision Tree Initial Custody Form**

The decision tree uses mostly the same risk factors as the additive point scale but uses a different logic to reach a custody level. The additive point instrument adds up the scores for each of the seven questions and the total score determines the inmate’s custody level. In contrast, the decision tree model uses the risk factors as a sequentially structured series of questions (or decision splits) and a yes or no response to each. Depending on each response, the inmate is channeled along different branches of the tree. The pattern of yes and no responses finally places the inmate into a specific box at the base of the tree. Each box represents different custody category.

As noted previously, a major difference of the decision tree approach is the number of separate boxes at the base of the tree (eight). These classify the inmate population into more refined classifications, although the three basic categories of high, medium, and low are retained (see tree diagram below). The tree has subcategories within each main custody level (e.g., minimum custody has three subcategories). These subcategories depend on whether the inmate has ties to the local community, has a felony or misdemeanor charge, and so on.

The following paragraphs clarify the questions used in the decision tree for initial custody classification. During training these must be carefully explained to trainees or new classification officers prior to conducting any of the practical exercise cases.

**Current offense assultive felony.** The first question on the tree establishes whether the offense is an assultive felony by determining whether the inmate’s current charges or convictions one of the offenses listed on the assultive felony crime list. This
requires a simple yes or no response. This offense list should be provided in the classification training. With the computerized version of the tree, some staff time can be saved because this list can be entered into the computer and will be searched automatically by the computer to answer this question. It is an easy task to enter the local assaultive felony list into the computer as a preliminary task (see Chapter 5 on software and automation). This assaultive felony crime list differs slightly across jurisdictions and the prototype list given below must be customized to be consistent with the local official crime categories.

**Prior assaultive felony convictions.** Does the inmate have a conviction history of one or more of the assaultive felony type offenses listed on the assaultive felony crime list? Although a yes response is required if there is a history of prior felony assault convictions, consideration may be given to the elapsed time since the prior conviction, which could be grounds for override consideration after completion of the tree. For example, a prior conviction for felonious assault 10 years prior may merit override consideration if the classification officer feels it is warranted.

**Escape history.** Is there a current charge or prior record of an escape or escape attempt from a secure correctional facility? Note that if there is a record of a walk-away from a nonsecure facility or court-ordered program such as a halfway house, work release center, or residential program, answer no to this risk split. The circumstances of the walk-away should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If the classification officer feels that the circumstances surrounding the walk-away warrant an escape security concern, use the override option to document the reason for the concern and assign the appropriate security/custody level.

**Three or more prior felony convictions.** Does the inmate have a record of three or more prior felony convictions, not including the current offense(s), in the past five years of street time? Street time is defined as that period of time not spent in a correctional facility. Convictions prior to the past five years of street time, other than those crimes listed on the assaultive felony crime list, should not be included. Juvenile non-assaultive felony convictions would be included if they fall within the last five years of street time.
**Detainers, warrants, or pending charges.** Are there any outstanding warrants, liens, detainers, or pending charges (excluding the charges for which the inmate is being booked, except if booked specifically for an outstanding warrant). Note that this may require individual facility policy decisions on the seriousness of outstanding charges to justify a higher security level. For example, an outstanding traffic warrant with a limited pick-up radius may, by department consensus, not be given a yes response in the tree. It may also be appropriate to designate probation/parole violation holds that are still pending a disposition decision as a yes response.

**Known past/present institutional behavior problem.** Has or is the inmate observing the rules and regulations of the facility? Is the inmate disrupting the facility or intimidating or threatening fellow inmates or staff? Is the inmate cooperating with the staff and facility routine? Has the inmate received a major misconduct ticket or multiple minor misconduct tickets during this or previous incarcerations? A serious behavior problem is one in which assaultive behavior or serious acts or threats of aggression against staff or other inmates has occurred or in which contraband that endangers the security of the facility (e.g., weapons) are involved. Jail administration, in conjunction with the classification staff, will need to reach consensus on what constitutes an "institutional behavior problem" which, as a result, produces a higher security/custody level. Typically, smaller jails have a more conservative definition of the problem than do larger jails. It is important for all jails, however, that the criteria used for making this determination be consistent among all classification staff.

**Presentence vs. post sentence.** Is the inmate in a pre- or post sentence status? If the inmate has multiple charges, all charges must be disposed of prior to being considered post sentence. Note that the inmate who is identified as presentence at this juncture in the tree and consequently classified as medium presentence, will likely be reclassified as minimum security level 6, 7, or 8 upon sentencing. If post sentence, the Current Offense Felony or Misdemeanor question comes into play. This asks whether the most serious current conviction is a felony or a misdemeanor. If the most serious offense is a civil offense, consider it a misdemeanor for purposes of the decision split.
Community ties. Does the inmate have immediate family in the community, has the inmate resided in the area for one year or longer, or has the inmate been steadily employed in the area for 6 or more of the last 12 months? Note that this decision split is intended to determine the inmate’s ties to the community. Each jail will need to determine what constitutes their geographic range definition of community.

High risk box. This is a list of red flag items that are often used to identify inmates as being a grave threat to themselves (suicidal) or to the staff or fellow inmates (system risk). As a result of a high-risk designation, a special high visibility or isolation placement may be warranted. If a high-risk designation is warranted, circle the high risk box and check the specific reason in the comment section of the instrument. A high-risk designation may or may not require an override of the decision tree findings. If it does require a deviation from the decision tree, complete the tree using the normal procedure, note the override and reason, and assign the appropriate custody/security level.

Special condition box. Is there a flag identifying an inmate as having a need or condition, such as a physical or mental handicap, diet restrictions, alcohol or drug withdrawal, that requires special attention? If a special condition exists, circle the special condition box and note the reason for the designation. A special condition may or may not require an override of the decision tree findings. If it does require an override, complete the tree using the procedure, note the override and reason, and assign the appropriate custody/security level.

Staff override. The decision tree format, like the point additive model, has a place to indicate special concerns and override decisions. These provide justification for a staff discretionary override of the level obtained using the decision tree.

Comments on the Severity-of-Offense Scales
As can be noted from the above instructions, several questions in both the additive points and decision tree instruments involve categorizing offenses or disciplinary infractions into levels of severity for scoring purposes. Each of the
instruments provides supporting documentation that lists specific offenses according to severity. These are discussed below.

**Severity-of Offense-List for Initial Custody Form**

The document titled “Severity-of-Offense Scale” that is part of the NIC package is a simple prototype of a severity list. This type of list is required to score the additive points custody scale. **Every jail will have to review this document and where necessary make revisions to bring it into harmony with local concerns.** Similarly, the decision tree protocol uses a list titled “Assaultive Felony Offenses and Felony Offenses.” Again, each facility that uses this protocol will have to develop a similar list. These two examples of a severity-of-offense list are offered as templates that can be modified as required by the local jurisdiction or jail.

**The Need for Standardized and Consistent Scoring**

The purpose of the severity lists is to standardize the decision methodology related to criminal charges for both the additive points and decision trees methods. It cannot be left to the line classification officer to determine which charges are serious or not, or violent or not. This offense weighting and categorization must be done in advance by the jail administration, documented in these lists, placed in the policy manual, and then distributed to every classification officer for use. The list categories should be complete, including every conceivable charge that an inmate in arriving in the facility could have. The goal is to ensure that every classification officer will have a standardized scoring system for every charge, which will produced consistency and reliability among classifications. In finalizing a local offense listing, we suggest the use of the lists given with the package of forms below as a starting point and then customize them according to the local criminal codes.

**Rational Balancing of Competing Policies**

As administrators of any small jail finalize a severity-of-offense scale, they must be aware of the implications of their decisions. A common temptation is to be guided by
emotional or political considerations. This must be tempered by the needs of the facility. For example, imagine that a community has experienced an increase of men exposing themselves to school children. A sheriff or administrator may be tempted to respond by ranking indecent exposure charges high or highest on the severity-of-offense scale, responding to a desire to send a message about the seriousness of the offense. The emotional and political sentiment is not necessarily wrong, but prudent administrators must also ask questions such as, “Are these offenders difficult to manage when in custody?” and “Do we have enough maximum custody bunks to accommodate these inmates, or will this cause us to bump some other higher risk inmates down into medium areas because of overcrowding?” Administrators must consider, for example, what they need to do to prevent these offenders from getting an outdoor trustee position. The severity-of-offense categorizations must be very carefully designed and their implications discussed rationally. The sample lists given below have been fairly successfully used in many jails, often with only minimal revisions.

**Careful Weighting To Avoid False Positives**

When deciding on severity categories for different charges, administrators also should be aware of the dual purposes of the instrument. One chief aim is to ensure that offenders who are dangerous to the community will be lodged in the most secure part of the facility. However, high security cells are very expensive to build and require staff-intensive supervision; jails must also try to achieve least restrictive custody. **Care should be taken that a severity-of-offense scale does not weight charges too high or unnecessarily, thereby causing an artificially high number of maximum custody inmates and over classification errors.**

**Preventing Reclassification to Minimum Security**

Another goal is to ensure that inmates with certain very serious charges cannot work themselves into programs or work crews that have access to minimum custody areas or release into the community. Skillful use of the severity-of-offense scale, designation of specific seriousness levels, together with carefully written classification policy, can prevent this from happening.
Reclassification or Classification Review

The reclassification forms differ significantly from the initial classification forms in both the selection and weighting of classification factors. Specifically, reclassification forms rely more heavily on an inmate’s institutional behavior since the last classification review (either initial or reclassification). Thus, criminal history is given less weight in both the additive points and decision tree approaches to reclassification.

The packages of forms contain simple descriptions and explanations of the questions used in the reclassification forms. Similarly, specific listings of serious violent offenses and seriousness of infractions (which may vary across jurisdictions) are given to achieve standardization of scoring at reclassification. These must be reviewed and customized to ensure consistency with local views on the relative seriousness of crimes and infractions. The seriousness lists given with these forms should be regarded as generic templates that may be revised locally.

Additive Points Reclassification Form

This form uses the same additive points scoring logic as the initial custody form but, as noted above, it emphasizes current behavior over criminal history. An inmate with no disciplinary problems will move toward a lower custody level because the point values on the criminal history risk factors have been reduced. An inmate with disciplinary problems will move quickly toward a higher custody level because of the higher weights on questions that assess the inmate’s behavior during the period of incarceration.

Review the first three risk factors on the reclassification form (severity of current charge, serious offense history, and escape history). Each has reduced point values compared to those used with the initial classification instrument. In addition, the sixth and seventh risk factors (prior felony convictions and alcohol/drug abuse) also have reduced point values. The most significant changes are in risk factors four and five, which focus on recent disciplinary behavior. Factor four scores disciplinary convictions since the last classification, and factor five scores the most serious disciplinary conviction using rankings provided by the disciplinary severity scale.
Training procedures: After explaining the logical structure of the two charts, the trainer should walk the trainees through several examples using both of these reclassification instruments to illustrate their use and to discuss the supporting documents provided with them in the course materials, such as the severity of disciplinary offenses. It is often useful to use real cases from the jail’s own population.

Decision Tree Reclassification Form

The decision tree procedure even more strongly shifts the emphasis squarely to an inmate’s current behavior in the institution and such behavior governs the upward or downward changes in custody level.

The instrument looks a bit more complicated at first glance, but the principle of emphasizing the inmate’s behavioral adjustment during a specific time period is the same as in the additive points approach. Each decision box contains a question concerning the inmate’s behavior or progress and program performance during the last period of incarceration.

The decision tree reclassification protocol is actually two instruments, one for aggravating and one for mitigating circumstances. The aggravating tree (the left side of the chart) is scored if there have been aggravating circumstances and the inmate is likely to be reclassified to a higher custody level. The starting box (on the extreme left side) is the inmate’s current classification. From there the inmate is assessed on each successive decision box moving to the right. On the aggravating side, each successive decision split assesses either bad behavior or legal status changes. The mitigating tree (the right side of the chart) is used if there are mitigating circumstances, consistently good behavior, or a lack of problems and it appears likely that the inmate will move downward to a lesser custody/security level. The starting box is the inmate’s current classification level. However in this situation the middle column of the chart is used as the starting box. The mitigating side of the tree measures positive attitude changes, program participation, and successes in the successive decision splits.
Needs Assessment Forms

Needs assessment in both additive points and decision tree systems are intended to assist an interviewer to identify any needs or shortcomings an inmate may have in certain critical areas that may require treatment.

Like the initial intake forms, the needs assessment forms may be customized to the local jail situation and resources. Both are national prototypes that may be readily modified to match the program offerings of a local jail facility.

NIC Needs Assessment Form

The rating process used with this form is guided by the scoring codes that are entered on the form. Definitions of scoring codes on the forms should guide the rater in filling out the form. The definitions relate to levels of severity and are defined as 1 = severe, 2 = moderate, and 3 = no problems.

The six areas to be rated in this process include health, emotional stability, education, vocational skills, substance abuse, and mental ability.

There is also room on the form for program recommendations, reassessment, and new program recommendations.

Northpointe Needs Assessment

Needs assessment in the Northpointe system does not use a separate form. However, essentially the same needs assessment areas are embedded in the initial intake screening form and the decision tree form. Questions on suicide risk, medical issues, and mental health issues, for example, are all embedded in various sections of the initial screening/intake form. In this approach, most of the needs are assessed earlier during the intake process, although they are to be again considered during the primary classification and reclassification interviews.

Guidance on Staff Overrides

In all of the classification procedures discussed in this chapter, staff discretionary overrides are allowed. The use of an override represents a departure from the strict standardized scoring and opens an opportunity for staff judgment to enter into
the process. Specifically, when the officer believes that circumstances require a deviation from the decision tree or point scale findings or recommendations, an override may be used. The following issues are important when considering override policy:

Supervisory Review of Override Reasons
In the decision tree process, classification staff circle override (on the manual form) and then document the reasons for the variance in the designated area. The officer can then assign a different custody/security level that appears more appropriate for the inmate being assessed. Such documentation should be systematically reviewed by supervisory staff and challenged when the reason given is ambiguous or questionable in the eyes of the supervisor. Such departures will normally be in the range of 5% to 15% of classification decisions with a roughly even balance between upward and downward overrides.

Aggravating and Mitigating Overrides
An aggravating override to a higher custody level occurs when the classification officer feels that the instrument did not adequately take into account an inmate’s propensity for violence, poor institutional behavior, locally notorious charges, or other factors that indicate that a higher security housing placement is in order. A mitigating override to a lower custody level occurs when the classification officer feels that the instrument did not adequately account for an inmate’s history of good institutional behavior, advanced age, physical condition, community standing, or other factors that indicate a lower security housing placement is in order.

Policy (Administrative) vs. Discretionary Overrides
Another important distinction among overrides involves the source of the override. Some override rules originate from higher administrators who may decide that a certain charge must always warrant an upward override (e.g., to maximum security) irrespective of all other considerations. This is then rigidly imposed, by policy, onto the line staff for routine use. As noted above, great care must be taken when establishing
such policies. Clearly, the other major source of overrides is the individual discretion of the staff classification officer. As noted above, documentation and careful supervision are the two requirements to maintain quality control over this category of overrides.

**Local Customization of Custody and Reclassification**

In contrast to the ease with which the initial screening and needs assessment scales may be modified, initial custody and reclassification scales are more tied to statistical scoring and are more difficult to modify without damaging their statistical properties. Thus, if these are modified it is advisable to conduct a careful validation study to examine the percentages of inmates being classified into the different custody levels.

We address customization and revisions in more detail in the Pilot Study chapter of this document.

**Common Problems in Small Jail Classification**

In this section we list some of the main hazards and problems that we have noted in the implementation of classification methods for small jails.

In many small jails, we have noted certain recurrent problems that can damage the classification process. These range from method design flaws to poor data quality, inadequate interviewing, and inappropriate assignment of staff to the classification function.

**Oversimplification**

Many jails are motivated to reduce and simplify classification to the lowest level possible. This simplification is usually justified as a workload issue. This involves the progressive omission of key components of the classification so that it is ultimately devoid any valid information content. The following are common styles of such oversimplification.

**Omitting Reclassification**

This approach omits the use of systematic reclassification. Any classification occurs only on the basis of critical incidents. This has several consequences. The
absence of reclassification is particularly damaging for longer-term inmates. Reclassification helps improve morale among such offenders and supports order and discipline by ensuring consequences for both good and bad behavior.

**Omitting the Face-to-face Interview**

When the interview is omitted, the classification process degenerates into a paper-driven process. Any possibility of detecting aggravating and mitigating factors is dramatically reduced, as is the possibility of any cross-verification of data. Thus, overall data quality diminishes if the interview is omitted.

**Omitting Data Verification**

Many small jails omit or dramatically abbreviate any attempts at data verification. Yet the hazards of relying strictly on official records, which may have missing data, data entry errors, and so on, are well known. However, it is equally hazardous to rely only on inmate self-report. Verification is important to maintain data quality. Unfortunately, procedures and staff time for verification are often minimized in many facility classification manuals or not even mentioned.

**Omitting Override Tracking**

The override process can clearly be abused or even totally omitted. Thus, it is important for the supervisor or administrator to track the rates and quality of overrides. Unfortunately, many jails have no procedure in place for systematic tracking of the frequency and quality of overrides.

**Neglecting to Assign Clear Staff Responsibility**

Another omission in many small jails is the lack of clearly dedicated classification staff such that no explicit responsibility is assigned for classification tasks. Thus, although there may be a general understanding that classification will be done by available line officers, the absence of specific responsibility means that many classification duties (e.g., reclassification) may fall through the cracks.
Oversimplifying Booking Processes

The booking screen is often abbreviated so that it accounts for only identification, current offense, and a very abbreviated medical and suicide risk screening. Many other features and data that can support short-term decisions are thus omitted. Criminal history and disciplinary history are both often unavailable, so that there is excessive reliance on current offense and the booking officer’s personal judgment. Triaging processes are often missing at intake, mainly because the kind of data that would guide such decisions are not collected. It may be necessary to upgrade the types of information collected at booking so that it can more effectively inform decisions regarding acceptance into custody, medical and mental health needs, and temporary initial housing.

Inadequate OJC Methods and Common Software Design Flaws

A common problem is that many small jails appear to adopt unusual or unique classification systems that have not been subjected to validation or have been developed by computer vendors who may have little training or understanding of jail classification or of NIC principles. Such systems may use unusual, unvalidated, or irrelevant risk factors. In many cases these flawed classification systems have been programmed into the jail modules of records management programs that are intended to meet the total law enforcement needs of a smaller sheriff’s department. We acknowledge that there is as yet no standardization of OJC, but we believe that OJC systems should be well aligned with OJC principles and NIC standards as promulgated in professional publications over the last two decades (Brennan, 1993; Solomon, 1980).

Several serious design flaws are unfortunately common when untrained persons attempt to design jail classification systems. We have noted these problems in several small jails. The following paragraphs describe the more common ones.

Misplaced Cutting Points

The additive points method tallies the overall points total for each offender and then uses cutting points to separate minimum, medium, and maximum security levels.
Such cutting points are sometimes inappropriately placed so that the classification method may systematically assign too many offenders to a high-risk status (if cut points are too low) or conversely place dangerous inmates into an erroneously low status (if cut points are too high). The cutting points in the NIC Custody Additive scale, for example, have been carefully designed to place the most dangerous offenders into maximum, yet we have seen jails cavalierly change the value of these cutting points.

**Irrelevant, Unreliable, or Invalid Risk Factors**

These are common problems. Jail staff may sometimes introduce a risk factor that has little relation to dangerousness, no basis of empirical supporting research (e.g., bail amounts), or is unreliable. Other risk factors are too subjective and cannot be verified or objectively determined (personal ratings of attitudes or other psychological factors).

**Ambiguity**

When risk factors are ill defined or ambiguous in their wording, correctional staff may interpret the risk factor in different ways, thus causing unreliability in the classification.

**Too Many Risk Factors**

When large numbers of risk factors are included, a classification system may become unwieldy and inefficient. It may lose a clear focus on a particular risk, and users will be unaware of what exact risk is being assessed. When too many risk factors are included in a decision tree, for example, the system may become unwieldy with too many final branches.

**Impossible or Difficult To Assess Risk Factors**

Some risk factors are difficult or impossible to assess. Examples of this include the institutional behavior of inmates in past incarcerations or juvenile criminal histories, which are often legally sealed. This makes the work of a classification officer frustrating, time consuming, or impossible.
Redundancy

A common error in correctional classification is to include several measures of the same variable. For example, seriousness of current offense is often double or triple counted in custody classifications by including separate risk factors for bond level, length of sentence, and separate ratings of seriousness of current offense.

Untested Borrowing from Other Facilities

A common practice in criminal justice agencies is to borrow a classification method from another jurisdiction and implement it without doing any of the necessary testing. It is well known that if a particular classification works in one jurisdiction, this does not mean that it will work in another jurisdiction (Wright, Clear, & Dickson 1984). Failure to test the effectiveness or validity of such a system has repeatedly been shown to be hazardous. For this reason, the NIC objective classification program strongly emphasizes local and periodic validation testing (Brennan, 1993; Solomon, 1980).

Finalizing Classification Design Without a Pilot Test

Many jails, especially small jails, omit the pilot study before implementing a classification design. In this case, they will have no knowledge of the validity of the system, how it compares to the previous system or to other candidate methods, or what impact it will have on the numbers of inmates processed into the different custody levels. This is common in jails where research and technical resources are limited.

Practical Examples: Cases for Training Practice

Now that the instruments and the supporting documents have been explained, trainees need to gain experience in completing the forms. At this point, the presenter should distribute the classification case studies, seriousness of offense lists, and appropriate forms. Choose one of the cases and then ask each participant, working alone, to classify this inmate using both the point additive and decision tree instruments. After each participant is finished, lead the entire group in collectively reporting their findings. Discuss any differences that arise and ask about override decisions or special handling flags. Comparisons between the methodologies should be made when appropriate, and the relative ease of both should be discussed. This also is a good time
to stress the importance of a complete severity-of-offense scale and classification user's guide. Repeat this process with additional cases until it is clear that the instruments have been mastered. Usually this can be accomplished with two to three case studies. The presenter will need to reserve time to allow the group to complete at least one run-through with the reclassification instruments.

The following prototypical cases have been developed so that staff can practice using the above objective instruments. Each of these cases contains some issues designed to provoke discussion among trainees. These cases are composites and do not reflect any real person.

**Case 1: Velma Ann Robinson**

Velma is a single female. She is not employed outside of the home. She is 24 years of age and is charged with misdemeanor possession of marijuana and attempted check forgery. Criminal records show that she has been convicted in the past for possession with intent to deliver cocaine and first offense drunken driving. She has an extensive juvenile record and has spent 23 months in prison as an adult for the drug charge. There is no record of disciplinary problems. Her current medical status is good, although she is reporting some symptoms of drug withdrawal and is asking to see the nurse. Velma is obviously upset about something. When asked, she laments over her children, who are left at home without adult supervision.

**Case 2: Jack Bruce Walters**

Jack is a 31-year-old male. He was booked on charges of felony destruction of property and has several bench warrants, one of which is a detainer from another county. He was intoxicated upon arrival, and the booking clerk suspected that he had an alcohol abuse problem. He denied having any emotional or substance abuse problems. Jack has had multiple arrests and four felony convictions, the most serious being felony assault, and the rest were cocaine charges. On the felony assault charge, he was sentenced to a correctional halfway house and treatment center. He walked away after three months and was arrested on an escape charge. The charge was later dropped, but he had to serve the balance of his sentence in prison. He was written up for six rule
violations the last time he was in jail, which was 13 months prior. The only major offense was a failure to obey an order. He has kept a job as a cook for the past five months, but has received word that he has been fired. His family refused to cosign a bond, and he has been living with various friends for the past year.

Case 3: Roy Charles Jones
Roy is a divorced 53-year-old male. He was remanded for sentencing on a rape charge. It is his second conviction for this same offense. Each time the victim was a male child who was known to the offender. He has no other record. He has never been to prison but will probably go this time. On the last charge, he spent 10 months in jail with no discipline. He was quiet during the interview and denied feeling suicidal but gives the appearance of being very sad. His only comment was that he has ulcers and if this time in jail is anything like his first time, he is sure they will get worse. He hinted that he was a victim of an assault during his first incarceration but refused to provide details. He admitted to having a drinking problem in the past but said he has been sober for six years. He has worked 25 years as an electronics salesman and owns his own home.

Case 4: Billy Lavell Highland
Billy is a 27-year-old male. He is in jail for domestic assault, providing false information to a police officer, and possession of a small amount of marijuana. He was intoxicated at the time of his arrest, and he admitted to addiction to both drugs and alcohol. He has no permanent address and is unemployed, as he has just returned from a year in Key West. He has stitches in his right hand. He reported that he has suffered for years from mental health problems. Billy said he attempted to drink himself to death when in Key West but then laughed halfheartedly. He has been arrested many times but has no felony convictions. His most serious arrest was a cocaine delivery charge, which was reduced to a misdemeanor possession charge. He has a warrant for his arrest in Key West, but the Florida officials have indicated that they will not extradite. He has a history of major rule violations while in jail during the first few days of each incarceration, but then settles down and does fine.
Case 5: Jonette East Lorraine

Jonette is a 47-year-old single female. She is serving a 7-day sentence for driving without a license. She has had two prior felony convictions for larceny. She was arrested when she was 19 for assault with the intent to murder, but the charge was reduced to misdemeanor simple assault, and she was sentenced to one year in jail. Every time she has been in jail in the past, she has received a number of major and minor disciplinary write-ups, but she has not been in jail for 14 years. She admitted to an alcohol problem and has a number of health problems. She does office work through a temporary employment agency and has rented the same apartment for several years.

Case 6: Jay Taylor Fairchild

Jay is a 23-year-old single male who is in jail on a charge of felony drunk driving and attempted assault of a police officer with a dangerous weapon (his vehicle). He has four prior arrests for drunk driving. He freely admits to having a drinking problem. He cried during the interview and said that alcohol has ruined his life. His parents are lifelong members of the community, and he is the only one of their children who did not graduate from high school and go on to college. He expressed great fear that he would go to prison this time, and he said he was very ashamed for his actions because his favorite uncle is a police officer and his mother is an employee of a local alcohol treatment facility. He has no record of jail discipline. He has worked as a cook in a number of local restaurants and he lives with three other young men in a big house that they rent from the father of one of the renters.

Conclusion

Designing a jail classification is unfortunately a technical matter with many opportunities to introduce design flaws (Jacoby, 1991; Spector, 1992). Correctional practitioners are generally not trained in statistics and psychometric measurement theory, which are the two main disciplines needed for designing classification with scientific quality. To ignore measurement principles is hazardous and may produce so-called common sense approaches that have virtually no reliability, validity, or focus. Again, unfortunately, the field of corrections has virtually ignored measurement theory in
designing its classification systems and has paid a heavy price (Brennan, 1993; Glaser, 1987; Wright, Clear, & Dickson, 1984).

Even so, the practitioner’s perspective is critical and any viable classification must be well aligned with the needs and skills of staff. Before any new system is finally introduced into routine operations, it is always important to run a pilot study to work out any problems that staff may have in using the new procedure.

There are substantial advantages, even in small jails, to having the classification process automated and fully integrated with the jail’s Management Information Systems (MIS). Chapter 5 focuses on the automation of classification and issues regarding computer software.

The following forms and instructions pertain to additive points scale and decision tree methodologies (inmate screening/initial classification, initial custody assessment/primary classification, and custody reassessment/reclassification).
Northpointe Decision Tree Forms
INITIAL CLASSIFICATION TEMPORARY CELL ASSIGNMENT

This instrument is intended to aid in the initial decision of temporary cell assignment and appropriate supervision levels at booking. It requires a direct interview between the inmate and booking officer combined with specific observations.

Name ___________________________ ID# ___________________ Sex ____________
Age _______________ Screener Name: __________________________ Date ____________

MEDICAL INTAKE AND HISTORY/ RECEIVING SCREENING

This section is intended to inventory the inmate’s present physical condition and medical status.

VISUAL OBSERVATIONS: (Booking Officer observations. Circle Yes or No)

Physical condition at intake: Good ______ Fair ______ Poor ______

Yes No 1. Does the inmate have obvious pain, bleeding or other symptoms suggesting need for emergency medical services?
Yes No 2. Are there visible signs of injury or illness requiring immediate treatment or care?
Yes No 3. Does the inmate appear to be under the influence of alcohol, or exhibit signs?
Yes No 4. Does the inmate appear to be under the influence of barbiturates, heroin, or any other drugs, or exhibit signs?
Yes No 5. Is there any jaundice?
Yes No 6. Is the inmate carrying any medications?
Yes No 7. Was the inmate taken to the hospital prior to intake? If so, treatment, medications, etc. __________________________

Yes No 8. Does the inmate’s behavior suggest the need for immediate psychological referral? __________________________

QUESTIONNAIRE: (Inmate’s response to questions, symptoms)

Yes No 1. Do you have a sore throat, fever, or other infection which may spread throughout the jail?
Yes No 2. Are you on a special diet prescribed by a doctor? If yes, describe __________________________
Yes No 3. Are you presently taking medications? If yes, list __________________________
Yes No 4. Are you under a doctor’s care? If yes, list: Doctor __________________________

Yes No 5. Have you been hospitalized recently? If yes, Where __________________________

Yes No 6. Do you have a history of VD or abnormal discharge?

Yes No 7. Are you allergic to any medication or food? If yes, list __________________________

Yes No 8. Have you fainted recently or had a recent head injury?

Yes No 9. Do you have a history of TB, hepatitis, epilepsy or diabetes? (If yes, circle one)

Yes No 10. Are you currently having shortness of breath, chronic cough, production of sputum, blood in sputum, night sweats, chest pain, weight loss, loss of appetite, or weakness? Notes __________________________

Yes No 11. Do you have a painful dental condition?

Yes No 12. If female: Are you pregnant?

Yes No 13. If female: Are you on birth control pills?

Yes No 14. Do you have any physical handicaps?

Yes No 15. Are you H.I.V. positive?

Yes No 16. Do you have any other medical problems we should know about? If yes, list __________________________

Yes No 17. Do you have any medical/dental insurance? If yes, list: Company __________________________

Policy Number __________________________

Officer’s Input (Medical) __________________________

I agree that the above information can be released to any counselor or attending physician.

Inmate Signature __________________________ Officer’s Signature __________________________

Notification of Medical Director Designee: Time ________ Whom __________________________

Physician/Nurse Signature __________________________
This section is intended to structure and document the booking officer’s observations. These observations should be used in conjunction with the Suicide Risk Section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Understands questions</th>
<th>Bizarre behavior</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Incoherent/Withdrawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assaultive/Violent behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Angry or hostile behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Loud/obnoxious behavior</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unusual suspiciousness</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lifeless reaction</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eyes red or bloodshot</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-inflicted injury scars on wrists, legs, neck</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Blank Stare</td>
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<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Confused</td>
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<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Timid/Shy</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unusually embarrassed</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>Effeminate (female)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Homosexual (in appearance)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOCIAL STRESS / SUICIDE RISK QUESTIONNAIRE

This section is intended to aid in identifying the potentially suicidal inmate and in minimizing the jail and jail staff’s potential liability. Depression is the best single indicator of risk; however, also look for these symptoms: sadness and crying, withdrawal, silence, loss of gain in appetite, insomnia, mood variations, and lethargy.

Have You Recently Experienced Any Of The Following? (Please Circle)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Job Loss</th>
<th>Wann</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Marital Separation</th>
<th>Wann</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Other Major Financial Loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Arrest of a Loved One</td>
<td>Death of a Loved One</td>
<td></td>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Loss of Business</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: ____________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Yes | No | Does the detainee show signs of evaluation in the community or is the offense shocking in nature?
Yes | No | Is this the detainee’s first arrest?
Yes | No | Do you have any unusual home or family problems we should know about? List: ____________________________________________________________
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_________________________________________________________________
JICS PRIMARY CLASSIFICATION

NAME: (last)                                                                    (first)                                                              (middle)
JAIL NO:                                                                                                            D.O.B.                                                                 RACE:                      SEX:                         SSN:                         
Charge(s) 1) 2) 3)                                                                                                                                       

You have been placed in the following classification:

This classification is determined by: current/past convictions; current/past institutional behavior; pending charges or holds in other jurisdictions (if any); sentenced or unsentenced; and/or any other information that may be deemed appropriate with regard to your personal security or the security of the facility. NOTE: Your classification can change when: charges are altered or reduced; you are sentenced; due to administrative hearings; due to regular periodic review; and / other reasons recommended by the jail staff.

Appeal Process: any inmate dissatisfied with his or her classification must appeal his / her classification, in writing, within ten (10) days of the primary classification or reclassification by addressing his/her appeal as APPEAL OF CLASSIFICATION and directing it to: the Sheriff or his designee.

Classified by:                                                        Date:                                                        

Comments by staff:                                                        

Booking Date:  PRIMARY SECURITY LEVEL ASSIGNMENT

High Risk: (Check)
- Assaultive
- Escape
- Suicidal
- Mental
- Gang Member
- Other __________

Special Condition: (Check)
- Protective Custody
- Medical
- Juvenile
- Handicap/Retarded
- Body Fluid watch
- Other __________

Known Past/Present Inst. Behavior Problems No
Known Past/Present Inst. Behavior Problems No
Known Past/Present Inst. Behavior Problems No

Override Reason:

Override ___

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Explanation of Decision Splits
for the Primary JICS Classification Instrument

Current Offense Assaulitive Felony: Are the inmate’s current charge(s) or convictions one of the offenses listed on the ASSAULTIVE FELONY CRIME list requiring a “YES” response?

Prior Assaulitive Felony Convictions: Does the inmate have a conviction history of one or more of the assaulitive felony offenses listed on the ASSAULTIVE FELONY CRIME list? Although a “yes” response is required if there is a history of prior felony assault convictions, consideration may be given to the elapsed time since the prior conviction, which may be grounds for override consideration after completion of the tree. For example, a prior conviction for felonious assault 10 years earlier may be given override consideration if the classification officer feels it is warranted.

Escape History: Is there a current charge or prior record of an escape or attempt from a secure correctional facility? Note: If there is a record of a walk-away from a nonsecure facility or court-ordered program such as a halfway house, work release center, or residential program, answer “no” to this risk split. The circumstances of the walk-away should, however, be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If the circumstances surrounding the walk-away warrant an escape security concern, use the override option to documenting the reason for the concern and assign the appropriate security/custody level.

3 or More Prior Felony Convictions: Does the inmate have a record of 3 or more prior felony convictions, not including the current offense(s), in the past 5 years of street time? Street time is defined as that period of time not spent in a correctional facility. Convictions prior to the past 5 years of street time, other than those crimes listed on the ASSAULTIVE FELONY CRIME list, should not be included. Juvenile nonassaulitive felony convictions would be included if they fall within the last 5 year street time period.

Detainers, Warrants, or Pending Charges: Are there any outstanding warrants, liens, detainers, or pending charges (excluding the charges for which the inmate is being booked, except if booked specifically for an outstanding warrant. Note: This may require individual facility policy decisions on seriousness of outstanding charges to justify a higher security level. For example, an outstanding traffic warrant with a limited "pick-up" radius may, by department consensus, not be considered a “yes” response in the tree. Consider designating probation/parole violation holds that are still pending a disposition decision as a “Yes” response.

Known Past/Present Institutional Behavior Problem: Has or is the inmate observing the rules and regulations of the facility? Is the inmate disrupting the facility, intimidating or threatening fellow inmates or staff? Is the inmate cooperating with the staff and facility routine? Has the inmate received a major misconduct ticket or multiple minor misconduct tickets during this or previous incarcerations?
A serious behavior problem is one in which assaulitive behavior or serious acts or threats of aggression against staff or other inmates has occurred or involves contraband that endangers the security of the facility (e.g., weapons).
Jail Administration in conjunction with the classification staff will need to reach consensus on what constitutes an “institutional behavior problem” that produces a higher security/custody level. Typically, smaller jails have a more conservative definition of the problem than do larger jails. It is important for all jails, however, that the criteria used for making this determination be consistent among all classification staff.

Pre- or Postsentence: Is the inmate in pre- or postsentence status? If the inmate has multiple charges, all charges must be disposed of prior to being considered post sentence. Note: The inmate who is identified
as presentence at this juncture in the tree and is consequently classified as medium presentence, will likely be reclassified as minimum security level 6, 7, or 8 upon sentencing.

If postsentence:

**Current Offense Felony or Misdemeanor:** Is the most serious current conviction a felony or a misdemeanor? If the most serious offense is a civil offense, consider it a misdemeanor for purposes of the decision split.

**Community Ties:** Does the inmate have immediate family in the community and/or has the inmate resided in the area for one year or longer and/or has the inmate been steadily employed in the area for 6 or more of the last 12 months? Note: This decision split is intended to determine the inmate’s ties to the community. Each jail will need to determine what constitutes their geographic range definition of “community.”

**Overrides:** If circumstances require a deviation from the primary decision tree that results in a security designation other than what would routinely occur if following the decision tree, it is designated an override. If it is necessary to override the tree classification, complete the tree using the normal procedure and then circle override (on the manual form) and note the reason(s) in the designated area. Then assign the custody/security level appropriate for the inmate.

**High Risk:** Is there a red flag identifying the inmate as a grave threat to themselves (suicidal) or to the staff or fellow inmates (system risk)? As a result of a high-risk designation, a special high visibility or isolation placement may be warranted. If a high-risk designation is warranted, circle the high risk box and note the specific reason in the comment section of the instrument. A high-risk designation may or may not require an override. If it does require a deviation from the decision tree, complete the tree using normal procedure, note the override and reason, and assign the appropriate custody/security level.

**Special Condition:** Is there a flag identifying an inmate as having a need or condition that requires special attention such as a physical or mental handicap, diet restrictions, alcohol or drug withdrawal? If a special condition exists, circle the special condition box and note the reason for the designation. A special condition may or may not require an override of the decision tree. If it does require a deviation from the decision tree, complete the tree using normal procedure, note the override and reason, and assign the appropriate custody/security level.
Northpointe JICS Reclassification Instrument Instructions

At the time of an inmate’s classification review, it may be determined that a reclassification of the inmate’s current custody assignment is necessary. The reason for a reclassification will fall into one of two categories: “aggravating” or “mitigating” circumstances.

Aggravating Circumstances

If it is determined that a reclassification is warranted and that the reclassification will be higher than the current classification due to aggravating circumstances such as a disciplinary infraction, a change in legal status (i.e., serious new felony charges added, status change from sentenced back to unsentenced due to new charges being added), use the Reclassification for Aggravating Circumstances Tree. Start on the left side of the tree by circling the inmate’s current custody level and move through the tree from that point to the reclassification assignment to the right (middle of the manual form). Circle the resultant reclassification custody level. Serious assaultive or escape-related disciplinary infractions will require use the override option when warranted.

Mitigating Circumstances

If it is determined that a reclassification is warranted and that the reclassification will be lower than the current classification or that the current classification may stay unchanged, use the reclassification for Mitigating Circumstances Tree. This accounts for mitigating circumstances such as periodic review for positive program involvement, positive attitude change, court/staff compliance, an extended period of disciplinary-free good behavior, a change in legal status from unsentenced to sentenced, removal of detainees, warrants, or holds, etc. For those jails that house sentenced inmates for several years, the inmate’s balance of sentence being less than two years may also trigger a reclassification. Start on the left side of the tree (middle bar) by circling the inmate’s current custody level and move through the tree from that point to the reclassification assignment on the far right. Circle the resultant reclassification custody level.

If when conducting the classification review, it is determined that the current classification is still appropriate, simply record the date, time, and name of the review officer and indicate no change in current classification level.

Classification staff should refer to their department’s specific training and classification policy and procedure for more detailed guidance in conducting classification reviews and reclassifications.
Classification Review and Reclassification Tree Split Instructions

Aggravating Circumstances Tree

Serious Assault/Escape Behavior Problems: Since last classified or reviewed, has the inmate committed or threatened a serious assault toward staff or other inmates, attempted or made threats of an escape, been involved in serious contraband that endangers the security of the facility (e.g., weapons), etc?

Serious Nonassault or Escape Behavior Problem: Since last classified or reviewed, has the inmate committed a major disciplinary infraction causing serious institutional disruption or concern other than for assault or escape?

Less Serious Behavior Problem: Since last classified or reviewed, has the inmate committed a major rule infraction or multiple minor rule infractions not involving a major assault or escape?

Serious Behavior Problem: Since last classified or reviewed, has the inmate committed a major rule infraction?

Legal Status Change: Since last classified or reviewed, has the inmate had additional serious charges added or, if a sentenced minimum security inmate, have any new charges been added for which disposition is pending, including any new detainers or warrants from other jurisdictions?

Mitigating Circumstances Tree

Marked Improvement in Compliance or Positive Attitude Change: Since last classified or reviewed, has the inmate shown a marked improvement in attitude or cooperation with staff and facility routine?

Program Effort, Positive Attitude Change, or Court/Staff Compliance: Since last classified or reviewed, has the inmate made positive steps in in-house program participation addressing the inmate’s assessed needs or has the inmate shown a marked improvement in attitude and cooperation with staff, facility routine, and recommendations? Note: Inmates are not eligible for a Custody Level lower than 3 if they were previously classified during this incarceration as a Custody Level 1 or 2 unless an override is used and documented.

Detainers, Warrants, or Pending Charges or Balance of Length of Stay Greater Than 2 Years: Does the inmate have any outstanding detainers, warrants, other pending charges (not including those for which currently incarcerated) or is the inmate’s sentence balance greater than two years?
Sentenced: Is the inmate sentenced on all outstanding charges for which they are currently incarcerated?

Felon or Misdemeanant: Is the most serious current offense a felony or a misdemeanor?

Community Ties: Does the inmate have immediate family in the community; or has the inmate resided in the area for one year or longer, or has the inmate been steadily employed in the area for six or more of the last twelve months? Note: This decision split is intended to determine the inmate’s ties to the community. Each jail will need to determine what constitutes its geographic range definition of “community”.

Overrides: If it is determined that circumstances requiring a deviation from the Reclassification Decision Tree and resulting in a security designation that is other than what would routinely occur by following the tree, it is designated an override. If it is necessary to override the reclassification tree, complete the tree through the normal procedure and then circle the appropriate override custody level (on the manual form) and note the reason in the designated area.

High Risk: Is there a red flag identifying an inmate as being a grave threat to themselves (suicidal) or to the staff or fellow inmates (system risk)? As a result of a high-risk designation, a special high visibility or isolation placement may be warranted. If a high-risk designation is warranted (or still applicable if previously assigned), check the appropriate high-risk box. A high-risk designation may or may not require an override to the reclassification tree. If it does require a deviation from the reclassification tree, complete the tree using normal procedure, note the override and reason, and assign the appropriate custody/security level.

Special Condition: Is there a flag identifying an inmate as having a need or condition (e.g., a physical or mental handicap, diet restrictions, alcohol or drug withdrawal, protective custody) that requires special attention or housing? If a special condition designation is warranted (or still applicable if previously assigned), check the appropriate special condition box. A special condition may or may not require an override to the reclassification tree. If it does require a deviation from the reclassification tree, complete the tree using normal procedure, note the override and reason, and assign the appropriate custody/security level.
NCCD Additive Point Scale Forms
## INMATE SCREENING FORM

### I. IDENTIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inmate Name (Last, First, MI)</th>
<th>Inmate ID</th>
<th>Screening Date</th>
<th>Screening Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### II. RISK AND NEEDS SCREENING

#### 1. SUBSTANCE ABUSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signs of Being Under the Influence of Alcohol/Drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs of Alcohol/Drug Withdrawal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type(s) of drug/alcohol used:</th>
<th>Use of Prescription Medication</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount consumed/taken</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time consumed/taken</td>
<td>Recent Hospitalization</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Why:</th>
<th>Where:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recent Head Injury</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2. SUICIDE RISK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suicidal Threats</td>
<td>Unconscious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Previous Stress Experiences | Obvious Pain | YES | NO |
| Extreme Shame/Embarrassment | Chronic Cough | YES | NO |
| Extreme Nervousness/Restlessness | Chronic Diarrhea | YES | NO |
| Extreme Depression | Current Itching/Skin Rash | YES | NO |
| Withdrawn/Non-communicative | Bleeding/Draining Wounds | YES | NO |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Heart Condition</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>Epilepsy/Seizures</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3. MENTAL HEALTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Past Treatment for Mental Health Problems</td>
<td>History of Ulcers</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Use of Psychotropic Medication | History of Exposure to Tuberculosis | YES | NO |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>History of Exposure to Venereal Disease</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>History of Hepatitis/Jaridace</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>AIDS/HIV</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abnormal Behavior</th>
<th>Current Pregnancy</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Use of Birth Control Pills</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dental Problems</td>
<td>Eye Glasses/Contact Lenses</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Handicap</td>
<td>Restricted Mobility</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermin</td>
<td>Lesions/Blues/Other Signs of Injury</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fever/Swollen Lymph Nodes/Other Infections</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

I understand that this screening interview has been conducted in my own best interest. I have answered all questions truthfully.

Inmate’s Signature ___________________________________________________________________

Interviewer’s Signature ___________________________________________________________________
INITIAL CUSTODY ASSESSMENT SCALE

I. IDENTIFICATION

Inmate Name (Last, First, Mi) ____________________________ Inmate ID # ____________________________

Assessment Date ____________________________ Classification Specialist ____________________________

II. CUSTODY EVALUATION

1. SEVERITY OF CURRENT CHARGES/CONVICTIONS (Use the Severity of Offense Scale: Rate the most serious charge/conviction, including any detainers/warrants.)

   Low ____________________________________________ 0
   Moderate ________________________________________ 2
   High ____________________________________________ 5
   Highest _________________________________________ 7

2. SERIOUS OFFENSE HISTORY (Use the Severity of Offense Scale: Rate the most serious prior conviction.)

   None or Low ___________________________________ 0
   Moderate _______________________________________ 1
   High __________________________________________ 4
   Highest ________________________________________ 7

3. ESCAPE HISTORY (Excluding current charges.)

   No escape or attempts ____________________________ 0
   Walkaway or attempted escape from minimum security facility or failure to return from authorized absence ____________________________ 3
   Escape or attempted escape from medium or maximum security setting ____________________________ 7

MAXIMUM CUSTODY SCORE (Add items 1, 2, and 3.)

With a score of 7 or higher, assign to maximum custody. (Always complete the remaining items, but do not total score if the inmate has already been assigned to maximum custody.)

Score (1-3) ____________________________

4. INSTITUTIONAL DISCIPLINARY HISTORY

   None or minor with no segregation time ____________________________ 0
   One or more major disciplinary reports and/or time in segregation ____________________________ 3

Score (4) ____________________________

5. PRIOR FELONY CONVICTIONS (Excluding current charges.)

   None __________________________________________ 0
   One ___________________________________________ 2
   Two or more ____________________________________ 4

Score (5) ____________________________

6. ALCOHOL/DRUG ABUSE

   No social, economic, or legal problems related to abuse ____________________________ 0
   Abuse resulting in social, economic, or legal problems ____________________________ 1
   Abuse resulting in assaultive behavior _________________________________________ 3

Score (6) ____________________________

7. STABILITY FACTORS (Deduct indicated points.)

   Age 26 or over ____________________________ -1
   Employed or attending school for 6 months prior to arrest ____________________________ -1
   Lived at same address for 12 or more months prior to arrest ________________________ -1

COMPREHENSIVE CUSTODY SCORE (Items 1-7)

Total Score (1-7) ____________________________

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III. SCALE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CUSTODY LEVEL INDICATED BY SCALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>1 = Minimum</th>
<th>2 = Medium</th>
<th>3 = Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Custody Classification Scale

- 7 or more points on items 1 - 3 = Maximum
- 5 or fewer points on items 1 - 3 = Minimum
- 5 or fewer points on items 1 - 7, with detainer/warrant = Medium
- 6 to 10 points on items 1 - 7 = Medium
- 11 or more points on items 1 - 7 = Maximum

B. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES (Check all that apply to this inmate.)

- Protective custody
- Psychological impairment
- Mental deficiency
- Escape threat
- Serious violence threat
- Known gang affiliation
- Substance abuse problem
- Known management problem
- Suspected drug trafficker
- Suicide risk
- Medical problem
- Physical impairment
- Other (specify):

C. OVERRIDE OF SCALE CUSTODY LEVEL IS RECOMMENDED

| Code | 1 = Yes | 2 = No |

If yes, give rationale (required):

__________________________

D. RECOMMENDED CUSTODY LEVEL

| Code | 1 = Minimum | 2 = Medium | 3 = Maximum |

Specialist Signature ___________________________ Date ________________

IV. SUPERVISOR APPROVAL OF OVERRIDE

A. RECOMMENDED CUSTODY LEVEL

| Code | 1 = Approved | 2 = Disapproved (Complete B.) |

B. FINAL CUSTODY LEVEL (if override disapproved)

| Code | 1 = Minimum | 2 = Medium | 3 = Maximum |

Rationale (required if different from recommendation):

__________________________

Supervisor Signature ___________________________ Date ________________

V. RECOMMENDED HOUSING ASSIGNMENT:
# Custody Reassessment Scale

## I. Identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inmate Name (Last, First, MI)</th>
<th>Inmate ID #</th>
<th>Reassessment Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Reassessment Date | Classification Specialist |

## II. Custody Evaluation

1. **Severity of Current Charges/Convictions** (Use the Severity of Offense Scale: Rate the most serious charge/conviction, including any detainers/warrants.)  
   - Low: 0  
   - Moderate: 1  
   - High: 4  
   - Highest: 6  
   
2. **Serious Offense History** (Use the Severity of Offense Scale: Rate the most serious prior conviction.)  
   - None or Low: 0  
   - Moderate: 1  
   - High: 3  
   - Highest: 6  
   
3. **Escape History** (Excluding current charges.)  
   - No escape or attempts: 0  
   - Walkaway or attempted escape from minimum security facility or failure to return from authorized absence: 2  
   - Escape or attempted escape from medium or maximum security setting: 6  
   
**Maximum Custody Score** (Add Items 1, 2, and 3.)  
With a score of 7 or higher, assign to maximum custody. (Always complete the remaining items, but do not total score if the inmate has already been assigned to maximum custody.)  

4. **Number of Disciplinary Convictions** (Since last classification.)  
   - None: 0  
   - One: 2  
   - Two: 4  
   - Three or more: 6  
   
5. **Most Serious Disciplinary Conviction** (Use the Disciplinary Severity Scale: Rate during this period of confinement.)  
   - None: 0  
   - Low: 1  
   - Moderate: 2  
   - High: 5  
   - Highest: 7  
   
6. **Prior Felony Convictions** (Excluding current charges.)  
   - None: 0  
   - One: 1  
   - Two or more: 2  
   
7. **Alcohol/Drug Abuse**  
   - No social, economic, or legal problems related to abuse: 0  
   - Abuse resulting in social, economic, or legal problems: 1  
   - Abuse resulting in assaultive behavior: 2  

**Comprehensive Custody Score** (Items 1-7)  
Total Score (1-7)
III. SCALE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CUSTODY LEVEL INDICATED BY SCALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>1 = Minimum</th>
<th>2 = Medium</th>
<th>3 = Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Custody Classification Scale

- 7 or more points on items 1 - 3: Maximum
- 5 or fewer points on items 1 - 7: Minimum
- 5 or fewer points on items 1 - 7, with detainer/warrant: Medium
- 6 to 10 points on items 1 - 7: Medium
- 11 or more points on items 1 - 7: Maximum

B. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES (Check all that apply to this inmate.)

- Protective custody
- Psychological impairment
- Mental deficiency
- Escape threat
- Serious violence threat
- Known gang affiliation
- Substance abuse problem
- Known management problem
- Suspected drug trafficker
- Suicide risk
- Medical problem
- Physical impairment
- Other (specify):

C. OVERRIDE OF SCALE CUSTODY LEVEL IS RECOMMENDED

| Code | 1 = Yes | 2 = No |

If yes, give rationale (required):

D. RECOMMENDED CUSTODY LEVEL

| Code | 1 = Minimum | 2 = Medium | 3 = Maximum |

Specialist Signature: ____________________________ Date: __________________

IV. SUPERVISOR APPROVAL OF OVERRIDE

A. RECOMMENDED CUSTODY LEVEL

| Code | 1 = Approved | 2 = Disapproved (Complete B.) |

B. FINAL CUSTODY LEVEL (if override disapproved)

| Code | 1 = Minimum | 2 = Medium | 3 = Maximum |

Rationale (required if different from recommendation):

Supervisor Signature: ____________________________ Date: __________________

V. RECOMMENDED HOUSING ASSIGNMENT: ____________________________
SEVERITY OF OFFENSE SCALE
(Sample)

HIGHEST:  Aiding Escape
Aggravated Battery with Deadly Weapon
Armed Robbery (multiple, with injury)
Burglary with Assault
Escape (secure facility)
Inciting Riot
Kidnapping
Murder (1stE, 2ndE)
Sexual Battery (with violence, upon minor)

HIGH:  Aggravated Assault
Aggravated Battery
Aggravated Child Abuse
Arson
Battery Law Enforcement Officer
Burglary (armed)
Extortion
False Imprisonment
False Report of Bombings
Controlled Substances (importation, trafficking)
Introduction of Contraband into Detention Facility
Manufacture of Explosives
Robbery (armed, strong armed)
Sexual Battery (other than capital or life felony)

MODERATE:  Armed Trespass
Burglary
Carrying Concealed Firearm
Forgery
Grand Theft
Manslaughter
Sale, Delivery, Possession of Controlled Substance
Tampering with Witness
Worthless Checks (felony)
Welfare Fraud (felony)
Escape (non-secure facility)

LOW:  Driving Under the Influence
Leaving the Scene of Accident
Battery
Carrying Concealed Weapon
Disorderly Conduct
Gambling
Offering to Commit Prostitution
Possession Marijuana (misdemeanor)
Possession Drug Paraphernalia
Petit Theft
Trespass
Worthless Check (misdemeanor)
DISCIPLINARY SEVERITY SCALE
(Sample)

HIGHEST: Assaulting Any Person
Fighting with Another Person
Threatening Another with Bodily Harm, or Any Offense Against His Person or Property
Extortion, Blackmail, Protection, Demanding or Receiving Money or Anything of Value in Return for Protection
Engaging in Sexual Acts with Others
Making Sexual Propositions or Threats to Another
Escape
Attempting or Planning Escape
Setting a Fire
Tampering With or Blocking Any Locking Device
Adulteration of Any Food or Drink
Possession or Introduction of Any Explosive or Ammunition
Possession of Contraband
Rioting
Encouraging Others to Riot
Engaging in, or Encouraging, a Group Demonstration
Giving or Offering Any Official or Staff Member a Bribe or Anything of Value
Giving Money or Anything of Value to, or Accepting Money or Anything of Value from, a Prisoner, a Member of His Family, or His Friend

HIGH: Destroying, Altering, or Damaging Government Property or the Property of Another
Stealing
Misuse of Authorized Medication
Loaning of Property or Anything of Value for Profit or Increased Return
Possession of Anything Not Authorized for Retention or Receipt through Regular Institutional Channels
Encouraging Others to Refuse to Work or to Participate in Work Stoppage
Refusing to Obey an Order of Any Staff Member
Insolence Toward a Staff Member
Lying or Providing False Statement to a Staff Member
Conduct that Disrupts or Interferes with the Security or Orderly Running of the Institution
Counterfeiting, Forging, or Unauthorized Reproduction of Any Document, Article, Identification, Money, Security, or Official Paper
Participating in Unauthorized Meeting or Gathering
Failure to Stand Count
Interfering with Taking of Count
Making Intoxicants or Being Intoxicated
Tattooing or Self-Mutilation
DISCIPLINARY SEVERITY SCALE (continued)
(Sample)

MODERATE: Indecent Exposure
Mutilating or Altering Issued Clothing
Refusing to Work
Unexcused Absence from Work or Any Assignment
Malingering or Feigning Illness
Failure to Perform Work as Instructed by Supervisor
Being in an Unauthorized Area
Using Abusive or Obscene Language
Unauthorized Use of Mail or Telephone
Unauthorized Contacts with the Public
Correspondence or Conduct with a Visitor in Violation of Posted Regulations

LOW: Wearing a Disguise or Mask
Failure to Follow Safety or Sanitation Guidelines
Using Any Equipment or Machinery Contrary to Instructions or Posted Safety Standards
Smoking Where Prohibited
Gambling, Preparing or Conducting a Gambling Pool, Possession of Gambling Paraphernalia
Being Unsanitary or Untidy, Failure to Keep One’s Person and Quarters in Accordance with Posted Standards
### INITIAL INMATE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health</th>
<th>REASSESSMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Date</td>
<td>Classification Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Limited physical capacity, acute illness; needs hospitalization or outpatient treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional Stability</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Severe impairment; danger to self, others; needs hospital environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5th grade or below reading, math skills; needs remedial or special education classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational Skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No discernible skill; needs training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Substance Abuse</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Frequent abuse resulting in social, economic, or legal problems; needs treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Ability</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Serious disability limiting ability to function; needs sheltered living, work situations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other: (1) describe ___________________________ Code Code

### Initial Program Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Code</th>
<th>Priority Code</th>
<th>Adjustment Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### New Program Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Code</th>
<th>Priority Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See Program, Priority, and Adjustment Codes on back of form.*
PROGRAM, PRIORITY, AND ADJUSTMENT CODES

Program Codes

This section would list and code all of the programs offered by the jail, such as GED, drug treatment, Alcoholics Anonymous, or computer science classes.

Priority Codes

1 = Urgent, immediate need
2 = Problem directly related to criminal behavior; high priority
3 = Problem resolution would enhance ability to succeed in community

Adjustment Codes

1 = Completed program satisfactorily
2 = Completed program unsatisfactorily
3 = Currently enrolled; satisfactory participation
4 = Currently enrolled; adjustment problems noted
5 = Inmate dropped from program; lack of interest, progress
6 = Inmate refused participation
7 = Program or program space not available
CHAPTER 5

INFORMATION NEEDS AND AUTOMATED JAIL MANAGEMENT IN SUPPORT OF CLASSIFICATION

To automate jail classification, both technical and administrative staff must understand the major goals of classification so that the means to achieve those goals will be built into the functionality of the jail management software (JMS). This chapter examines critical features and functions of an automated classification component that should be provided by the JMS. This chapter also identifies critical data elements and offers a simple assessment exercise that will enable one to gauge the adequacy of the JMS classification component. Counties seeking to acquire new jail management software will find this chapter helpful in making a more informed purchase or in designing their own system. This information will also be useful in holding any current software vendor accountable for providing quality automated objective classification and jail management solutions.

In addition, this chapter reviews the general information needs of both manual and automated classification instruments.

General Information Needs

Objective classification decisions are data driven. They require information from several sources. Assuming that the classification instrument is valid, the quality of the classification is then determined by the availability, quality, and timeliness of the data.

When selecting the classification instruments to be used, it is important to determine what information is necessary to respond to each question and the source of this information. Several information sources are needed, including

- National criminal history databases (NCIC, LIEN, etc.);
- State criminal history databases;
- Prior incarceration file (master inmate jacket for disciplinary history, classification assignment history, special needs, previous alerts, etc.);
• Court commitment papers (sentence information);
• Arrest report (to clarify circumstances of the arresting charge, particularly helpful with some plea bargain offenses, and to clarify offenses on the “override consideration list” with the decision tree system);
• Other institutional confinement data (classification, disciplinary history, special management issues from other facilities); and
• Inmate interview.

Each data source must be considered for accessibility and data quality. Although the data may be available, if it is suspect or incomplete, then it will affect the quality of the classification.

Finally, timeliness of the data and procedures to access it must be determined. If, for example, NCIC searches are available but take several hours to conduct, this may inhibit the ability to conduct the classification in a timely manner to support efficient processing of inmates.

If the jail is not automated, we recommend that a classification jacket (manual file) be created for each classified inmate. This jacket, filed under a master ID number, should include hard copies of the classification and reclassification instruments, disciplinary history, criminal history, inmate interview form (if used), classification notes, housing assignments (cell, date, time), and so on. A system for logging next review dates should also be developed to support timely classification reviews per department policy.

Jail Management Software (JMS) Overview

JMSs have traditionally been used to store required data about offenders for essential record keeping and to facilitate basic inmate management routines. There has generally been limited demand on these systems to collect a broad range of data in utilitarian formats to provide both “canned” and ad hoc reporting capabilities to support modern correctional needs.

It is important to understand that the jail is the hub of the local criminal justice system. In most counties, considering the total amount of automated
offender information stored in the criminal justice system (including courts, prosecutors, police agencies, and probation), 75% of the total is collected in the jail. Because of this, the jails’ information needs (both inmate-specific and facility-based), and the needs of the local criminal justice system depend upon the adequacy of the JMS.

To address many of the issues with which jail administrators are faced today as they strive to manage and plan local corrections more effectively and efficiently, it is important to understand and quantify the issues and problems that may need attention. For example, there are fluctuating inmate security profile trends, changes in population characteristics, jail crowding, lack of adequate staffing, and other issues. Much of the information needed to arrive at solutions can and should be available from a well-designed, well-developed JMS and the data it collects and manipulates.

In addition, it is important that the JMS have the capacity to interface easily (i.e., communicate/share information) with other criminal justice management information systems (MIS). In some instances the interfacing of local criminal justice MIS systems requires sole-source contracting with a single provider offering an integrated criminal justice MIS solution that includes the jail, courts, probation, prosecutor, records management, commissary program, inmate phone system, and so on. With open systems technologies, individual criminal justice agencies should demand the ability to shop for their best solution, which should provide for easy interfacing with other similarly selected MIS systems in other agencies. This is particularly important to small jurisdictions in which the budget cannot accommodate enterprise-wide solutions and that must begin to automate the functions of the criminal justice system one component at a time.

**The benefits of capitalizing on modern technologies include:**

Individual software programs that comprehensively meets the special needs of the jail: this offers an attractive alternative to the sole-source vendor’s product that comes with their comprehensive packaged software and claims to have something for everyone;
Systems that provide the ability to exchange relevant data between agencies by interfacing component-driven solutions;

Systems that are flexible. If a jail outgrows its component of an agency-wide MIS or if the technology advances, the individual jail can “unplug” its JMS module from the overall integrated collection of agency software modules and plug in a new software program at a fraction of the cost of replacing the entire integrated system. This adds both political and financial practicality.

Some additional guidelines and issues that should be considered in selecting a jail management system include

Coded and configurable data fields to facilitate quality data entry, data management, and usable data formats for reports and statistical outputs;

A true “open system” architectural design that confers relative ease and low cost in interfacing or integrating the JMS with other agency MIS systems (e.g., NCIC, LEIN), and simplified “plugging and unplugging” of new technology upgrades and peripherals (e.g., photo imaging, live scan, bar coding systems) as desired;

Easy, consistent, intuitive, user-friendly software navigation. New user interface technologies offer point-and-click access, context-sensitive help, drop-down menus, and so on. Older technologies require more cumbersome procedures for navigating through the application, often including moving through several data entry screens or submenus to get to the desired point in the application;

Flexible system design that accommodates user-configurable tables that customize the system’s input options to the needs of the local jail. This flexible design approach, plus other new design features such as comprehensive ad hoc report capabilities, supports self-sufficiency and cuts the traditional umbilical cord to the vendor. This minimizes the costly and inefficient dependence on the vendor in making system modifications, supplying custom reports, and so on.
Automating Classification

In general, JMS vendors have little understanding of objective classification. Most purport to have classification in their packages, but few actually offer well-designed, validated instruments. Fewer still understand the data elements necessary to support a well-designed classification system, or how the software should assist the user in retrieving this information and implementing effective classification procedures.

The two national classification system models have been presented in this manual. Use caution in monitoring the faithful replication of these two systems by software vendors, particularly in replicating the point scale. It is easy to modify point values for the various risk factors, which vendors often do in a rather cavalier fashion because of the general lack of any appreciation for validity. Once validity is lost, the classification instrument’s trustworthiness is gone and it may no longer properly identify or separate offenders, thus rendering the entire classification system ineffective and increasing potential liability.

Automation of classification functions should facilitate all of the basic processes that must be accomplished in any jail classification. It is important that the primary uses of classification are understood so that these objectives can be designed into the functionality. These primary uses are

1. Faithfully replicate the classification instruments and scoring procedures;
2. Drive inmate housing decisions consistent with the goals of classification, facility policy, and the housing plan;
3. Drive eligibility for inmate programs by assessing needs;
4. Identify and monitor inmate alerts, such as mishoused inmates, suicide watch, holds/detainers, incomplete classifications, and gang membership;
5. Identify offender subpopulations for early release, community corrections screening, work assignments, and so on; and
6. Collect, store, and easily retrieve appropriate and relevant classification-related and inmate-specific data for management, planning, and policy applications.

The screen shots below (Figures 1, 2, and 3) show examples of automated initial and primary classification.
Figure 1. Initial Classification

Figure 2. Decision Tree
With the primary uses of classification as the cornerstone of the automation design approach, other critical features and functions of automated classification should then be addressed. These should promote efficiency and accountability in implementing the day-to-day classification tasks by line and management staff. These features include

*Managing the classification procedure:* The system should facilitate the identification of inmates who are due for various stages of classification, identify those overdue for classification, print inmate classification notices, generate on-demand hard-copy reports of classifications, and so on.

Figure 4 provides an example of automated search capabilities for identifying inmates who are due for primary classification (i.e., in the facility for more than 72 hours unclassified) or classification review.
Figure 4. Search Screen for Inmates Due for Classification

**Accessing, retrieving, and organizing the data:** Good classification demands a large amount of quality data that can be accessed in a timely fashion. This includes relevant information from previous incarcerations, current offense and legal status, prior criminal and disciplinary history, court sentencing information, and medical/mental health summaries. Automation should facilitate the timely retrieval of all relevant, available data in a well-organized, easy-to-access format.

Figure 5 illustrates relevant information being shown to staff as they move through the questions in the classification instrument (in this case, disciplinary history).
Managing cell assignments and inmate movement: Classification automation should assist the classification or housing officer in inventorying available and appropriate beds to house the inmate consistent with the facility's housing and classification policy. Mishoused inmates should be tracked and documented for proper notification, monitoring, and housing adjustment when appropriate beds become available.

Figures 6 and 7 show how an automated system can identify available beds that match the offender's classification and screen out or alert staff of any keep separates in the cell or pod.
Figure 6. List of Available Cells That Match the Inmate’s Classification

Figure 7. Mishoused and Keep-separate Alerts

**Statistical management reports for monitoring operations and quality control** (see Figures 8 and 9): Well-designed automated classification should provide a variety of canned and ad hoc reporting and statistical capabilities that detail the various classification-related monitoring indices. These include aggregate security and custody level profiles, classification staff workloads, override rates and reasons, mishoused inmate summaries, and summaries of classifications performed.
These data are critical to management and line staff for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of classification procedures in the facility.

Figure 8. Security Profile of Inmates Booked During the Reporting Period

Figure 9. Override Rates and Reasons During the Reporting Period
Classification System Content

Content is the extent of coverage of the information collected in the JMS to support all aspects of inmate management and facility and agency management decisions.

The JMS must provide comprehensive, accurate, reliable, timely, and user-friendly information to support classification decisions. All data fields must be easily completed, clearly labeled, and must contain data needed at each phase and ancillary phase of classification and related inmate management decisions. Intake must assign a unique identifier to each inmate, which requires a search of the current and historical JMS for the master Person ID. The JMS should have one unique person identifier for each inmate. This is critical for accessing criminal history, disciplinary history, classification history, and so on, in support of making new classification decisions.

The following are critical data elements needed for a comprehensive JMS classification system.

a. Initial Classification (intake screening)
   - Full name/previous names/aliases
   - Current charge(s)
   - Holds, detainers, outstanding warrants
   - Date of birth
   - Gender
   - Race/ethnicity
   - Jail admission date and time
   - Admission reason (e.g., new arrest, serving sentence, warrant/detainer, INS, boarding for other county)
   - Legal status (pretrial/sentenced)
   - Suicide risk inventory, including prior suicide risk history
   - Mental health illness crisis/history
   - Initial contagious disease inventory
• Obvious medical alert signs (e.g., bleeding, jaundice)
• First-time offender (yes/no)
• Enemies/codefendants
• Comments

b. Primary Classification
• Seriousness of current offense
• Criminal conviction history
• Escape history
• Disciplinary history by date, type, disposition
• Notoriety/social standing
• Gang affiliations
• Employment status
• Substance use history (point scale)
• Final classification security/custody level assignment
• Total point score (if point system used)
• High risk or special condition flags
• Classification date
• Classification officer name
• Next review date
• Projected outdate
• Override designation and reason (if applicable)
• Housing assignment, date, time, placement officer name
• Program eligibility or trusty job assignment
• Comments

c. Classification Review
• Reason for review
• Reclassification security/custody level assignment
• Total point score (if point system used);
• High risk or special condition flags
• Reclassification date
• Reclassification officer name
• Next review date
• Housing assignment, date, time, placement officer name
• Override designation and reason (if applicable)
• Comments

**Evaluating JMS Adequacy and Automated Classification Functions**

The following exercise is intended to assist in evaluating the comprehensiveness, functionality, and usability of classification-related components of the JMS and in identifying areas that need improvement. The automated classification and JMS features that are listed in the evaluation instruments may also be useful to jail administrators in developing system specifications for Requests for Proposals for new classification or JMS software. Table 1 provides evaluation definitions for the system assessment exercise. Table 2 is a guide for assessing the classification-related features of current JMS software.
Table 1. Evaluation Guidelines for JMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Software Functionality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functionality</strong> refers to how the JMS system stores, retrieves, organizes, and presents data to users on a routine basis. If automation is to be fully utilized, the JMS design should assist the user at every possible stage in managing the data in the system to promote timeliness and efficiency.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>System organizes decision-support data in an efficient, effective manner; readily displays data as needed. System edits prevent missing data and reduce or prevent inaccurate entries based on coded fields and automated logic.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Some data organized efficiently/effectively; some decision-support data readily displayed. Prevents most missing data; prevents some erroneous data entry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Keyed data not efficiently organized/presented. Few checks on missing data or erroneous data entry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Integrity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(This is both a JMS design issue and a user-input issue. It pertains to such things as how the data are recorded and stored in the JMS, such as free-form text or coded values, omissions of data, general confidence in the quality and integrity of the data, and so on.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Meets all or most system expectations.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Integrity of data for most part is good, does not seriously hinder the user.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Integrity of data is suspect/often unreliable/not current; may seriously impair user.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User Interface</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>User interface is the interaction between the user and the software. Users must navigate various JMS menus, screens, and other functions of the system. It is critical to a well-designed JMS that the user interface be easily navigable, easy to understand, easy to learn, and flexible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>System is easily understood; screens are well organized and easy to navigate, well integrated with workflow.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>System is understandable/relatively easy to learn, follows workflow, is relatively easy to navigate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>System is not very understandable; does not follow workflow, not easy to navigate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. JMS Classification-related System Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JMS Classification-Related Function</th>
<th>Functionality</th>
<th>Data Integrity</th>
<th>User Interface</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTAKE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Master System ID Search</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inmate Physical Characteristics</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Inmate Demographics</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Background Data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Current Charge Information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Identify Keep Separates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Identify Detainers/Warrants</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medical/Mental Health Screening</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Initial Medical/Mental Screening</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Suicide Risk Screening</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Previous Suicide Assessment and Attempts Brought Forward</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Computations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sentence Dates, Sentence Lengths</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent/Consecutive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Time Credits at Intake</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Automated Ongoing Time</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit Adjustments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRIMARY CLASSIFICATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Integrated Criminal History &amp; Search</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Seriousness of Current Offense</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculated</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Escape History</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Integrated Legal Status (Pretrial or</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Inventories Gang Status, Disciplinary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History, Age, Brings Forward</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Other Instrument Risk Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Automated Recommended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Classification Assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JMS Classification-Related Function</td>
<td>Functionality</td>
<td>Data Integrity</td>
<td>User Interface</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. High-risk and Special Condition Inputs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Other Automated Inmate Management Alerts, e.g., Protective Custody, Medical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Document Override and Reason</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Classification Officer, Date, Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programs and Needs Assessment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Previous Assessed Needs and Program Participation History</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Criminal History (e.g., domestic abuse, drug/alcohol offenses) Inventoried</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Current Needs Assessment Inventoried</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tracks Program/Work Assignments &amp; Schedules</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tracks Enrollments, Terminations, Termination Reasons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing Assignment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Automatically Inventories Available Beds Based on Housing Policies</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Automatically Warns of Keep-Separates or if Mishoused</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
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<td>3. Documents Housing Assignment, Date, Time, Officer</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
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<td>4. Flags Inmate Record as Mishoused, Tracks Days Mishoused</td>
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<td><strong>RECLASSIFICATION</strong></td>
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<td>1. Tracks, Flags Inmates Due for Review</td>
<td>□ Good</td>
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<td>2. Tracks Current Disciplinary History and Brings Forward</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
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<td>3. Tracks Program Involvement and Brings Forward</td>
<td>□ Poor</td>
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<td>4. Tracks Legal Status Changes</td>
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<td>JMS Classification-Related Function</td>
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<td>Classification Assignment, Date, Officer</td>
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<td>6. Documents Override and Reason</td>
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<td>3. Classification and Housing History Saved</td>
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CHAPTER 6

CLASSIFICATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SMALL JAILS

Introduction

Written policies and procedures are critical to the effective implementation and operation of a classification plan. Written policy and procedure (P&P) articulates the administration’s policy, philosophy, and expectations of staff in support of the goals of classification. Policy statements communicate what the agency intends to do and procedures describe specifically how they will be carried out and by whom.

P&P content should:

- Comply with state standards;
- Comply with court rulings, case law, (within local and federal jurisdiction), and constitutional requirements;
- Comply with national standards and professional standards [e.g., accreditation standards such as ACA or National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC); many of those standards are hard for a small jail to attain].
- State philosophy and purpose;
- Describe how things will be done;
- Describe who is responsible for each task;
- Describe the timeframe for each task;
- Describe how the classification process will be monitored; and
- Avoid conflict with other parts of P&P manual.

The classification P&Ps should be developed prior to training staff for the implementation of classification. They should be read and understood by all
classification and correctional staff. We suggest that after staff have read the P&P, they sign off” stating that they have read and understood it.

A well-written P&P (if implemented and followed by staff) has many benefits and should improve operations, increase efficiency, minimize liability, and produce better-trained and more effective staff.

**Guidelines for Writing P&P**

P&P should be written so that administrative expectations are clearly understood by staff. The writing must be easy to understand, direct, precise, and consistent. The P&P manual should include the purpose and rationale of the policy to enhance staff understanding and minimize the influence of their own personal agendas or wishes, which can lead to inconsistent practices. Formal policy statements should clearly support management philosophy rather than contradict it.

*A policy is a statement of what the organization intends to do regarding a particular issue. It reflects the philosophy of the jail and defines why this action is to be taken.*

*A procedure describe how to implement a policy. Each procedure must have a policy that governs them. Procedure statements should convey the specific actions to be taken to support the policy.* A procedure is a detailed step-by-step description of how a policy is to be accomplished. Procedures must also be presented in the appropriate sequence to convey a clear understanding of the entire process. Proper sequencing will also minimize staff mistakes when they are implementing the procedures. Procedures must identify what is to be done, who is responsible for completing each task, and when and where it will be done. This makes it easier for management to monitor operations by identifying tasks, responsible parties, and timeframes.

Procedures should also indicate the appropriate methods of communication to be used and should identify any forms to be used in completing the procedure. It is also important that the procedures identify when and what discretion may be used by staff.
It is critical to include a section that defines each term that is used in the P&P. Management should not assume that all readers of the P&P will understand the meanings of the terminology that are used. Without clear definitions, the P&P cannot be properly implemented, ambiguity may creep into staff procedures, and potential liability may increase.

Finally, classification P&P should be reviewed annually by a designated administrator or the classification committee. The P&P should be reviewed and revised periodically as necessary, to reflect current goals, objectives, physical plant, and staffing patterns of the department. The review should respond to the following questions:

- Is the policy or procedure practical?
- Is it consistent with organizational philosophy?
- Does it comply with state standards, court rulings, constitutional requirements, professional practices, and so on?
- Is the policy or procedure defendable?

**Classification Staffing**

As noted elsewhere, small jails (150 beds or less) generally have two or fewer classification staff. A general rule of thumb is that about one classification staff person is needed for each 125 inmates in general population. In small jails two staffing approaches may be considered. The first method is to have dedicated classification correctional officer specialists. The advantages include the ability to concentrate the duties of classification in one or two specially selected, trained, and motivated staff. This promotes consistency. Unfortunately, many small jails do not have sufficient staff to accommodate a dedicated classification specialist. They adopt an alternative plan of “everyone-wears-all-the-hats” out of sheer necessity. The advantage of this model is that all of the staff are trained in classification, which offers more flexibility to management. The likely disadvantages are reduced consistency, classification tasks falling between the cracks, and reduced quality of work.

Below are classification staffing models listed from most to least favorable.
1. **Dedicated classification staff**: One staff person for each 125 inmates;

2. **Assigned classification team**: Two to three staff persons assigned to do classifications and a classification coordinator to monitor the program to ensure that classifications are completed correctly and on time; and

3. **All staff persons trained to do classifications** *(all staff wear all the hats)*: A supervisor will monitor the operations to ensure that classifications are completed correctly and in a timely manner.

In small jails, classification responsibilities can generally be accomplished on the day shift. New admissions from the previous shift(s) can be processed in the morning, and court returns and reclassification workloads processed during the day. Concentrating classification on one shift also tends to increase consistency and is more easily supervised by administration. Administrators should identify their staffing model of choice prior to developing the P&P.

**Classification P&P Exercise**

The following is a classification policy exercise developed from years of working with jails in the development of classification P&P. The boilerplate language in this document is generic and can be revised as appropriate to suit the facility, staffing resources and general philosophy. The fill-in-the-blank sections are used to identify what specific staff will be responsible for each task and when a task will be performed. The exercise can be used as a template for developing a P&P statement for most small jails.

Each policy statement is followed by one or more procedures that govern enactment of the policy.

**Exercise Instructions**

Begin reading the sample P&P and make edits as necessary. Fill in the blanks for the various job responsibilities with appropriate staff titles. *(Do not use individual names. Rather, use titles because the person doing a job may change, whereas the position title will generally remain constant.)*
Determine which classification instrument method (decision tree or additive points; see Chapter 4) to use and select the appropriate term definitions that are consistent with that instrument.

Use the information from other chapters in this manual to complete the housing plan in the appropriate section of the policy manual. Attach a copy of the housing plan as an appendix to the P&P. In the same manner, complete the program and privileges section using the provided example as a guide.
POLICY: GENERAL I

The __________ County Jail staff will implement and maintain the inmate classification plan to provide for inmates being inmates are classified in a fair and consistent manner according to their individual custodial management and program needs.

The purpose of inmate classification is to provide fair and consistent guidelines in determining inmate assignments (pre- and post-arraignment) to housing areas, security levels, treatment, and program services. This plan is intended to ensure that such decisions are made to the benefit of both the facility and the inmate and will ensure that proper documentation is maintained of such decisions. Classification information shall be managed in a fashion that allows monitoring and evaluation of facility programs, planning, and budgeting.

The classification system shall provide for the management and confinement needs of this facility and inmate for their protection, the safety of other inmates, the safety of staff, to prevent escape, and to protect the general public. The risks and needs of each newly admitted inmate shall be assessed and addressed individually, based on objective and identifiable criteria that provides for placement of the inmate in the least restrictive housing compatible with his or her assessed risks and needs. Inmates shall not be classified based on the lack of the availability of space in an appropriate housing assignment. Classification assignments shall not be changed to meet a housing placement.

Classification procedures shall be administered equitably and consistently, without discrimination against any individual based on sex, race, color, creed, culture, background, physical or mental handicap, or national origin.

A classification record shall be maintained for each inmate. The record shall contain all available information concerning current offense, criminal conviction history, and past and present institutional records, including the inmate's complete disciplinary history and any history of medical or mental health conditions requiring special housing considerations.

DEFINITIONS: GENERAL I

Inmate Classification: The process of assigning an inmate to a level of security and identifying program and treatment needs according to a specific plan.

Jail Classification Plan: This basically consists of the jail’s classification policies and procedures.

Custodial Management: This describes the way in which jail staff supervise and house an inmate according to a specific plan based on the level of security assigned to an inmate.

Classification Security Category: The inmate’s assigned security designation will be either maximum, medium, or minimum.

Classification Custody Level: (for decision tree method) This refers to the inmate’s assigned institutional custody designation within an assigned security level, consisting of one of the following: level 1, high; level 2, close custody; level 3, medium (with assaultive or escape background); level 4, medium; level 5, medium pre-sentence; level 6, minimum; level 7, low minimum; and level 8, very low minimum. The decision tree on the other hand will have the three traditional levels (minimum /low risk, medium, and maximum/high risk).

Override: This refers to the option of changing the objective classification instrument assignment of an inmate in response to mitigating or aggravating circumstances as determined appropriate by the classification staff.
Initial Classification: The initial assessment/screening process at intake/booking to determine immediate temporary cell assignment, level of supervision, and emergency medical or mental health needs.

Primary Classification: The process of determining the inmate’s security classification prior to making a housing assignment into the general population.

Classification Review: The process of reviewing an inmate’s security/custody level periodically, or as a result of disciplinary action, change in legal status, new pertinent information, a change in mental health, program or work record, or by staff request.

Reclassification: The process of changing an inmate’s classification designation as a result of a classification review.

POLICY: GENERAL

The __________ County Jail shall maintain administrative oversight to ensure that inmates are classified in a fair and consistent manner according to the inmate's individual custodial management and program needs.

PROCEDURE: GENERAL, INMATE CLASSIFICATION STAFF

The ______________________ (or designate) will review the jail inmate classification plan at least annually with the ________________________.

The ______________________ shall be responsible for and coordinate all classification functions within the __________ County Jail System.

The ________________________ shall ensure that classification officers have specialized training in inmate classification methods and theory.

The ________________________ shall provide for the training of all staff to the jail classification policies and procedures on an entry-level and ongoing basis.

The ________________________ shall assign the classification officer(s) as the jail staff responsible for the primary classification.

The ________________________ shall ensure that decisions made by classification jail staff concerning the level of custodial management and program participation of an inmate is consistent with the jail classification plan.

The ________________________ shall be responsible for making inmate housing assignments consistent with the assigned security level.

1. The Classification Staff shall consist of the day shift supervisor and specially trained correctional staff (or)
The Classification Staff shall consist of the Classification Sergeant and _____ dedicated Classification Correctional Officers.

The Classification Staff will have the authority to make decisions regarding the following tasks:

a. assign inmates to security/custody categories,

b. hold classification reviews and reclassify inmates as appropriate to ensure that inmates’ classification and treatment considerations are current, and

c. assign inmates to appropriate housing.

2. The Classification Committee will consist of at least three (3) members: Classification Sergeant, a classification officer, and the ____________________ (e.g., a civilian position such as clergy, treatment provider, etc). The Classification Committee will have the authority to

a. review classification appeals when necessary,

b. review complex classification decisions when necessary or required by the Sheriff or ____________________, and

c. participate in the annual review of the jail classification plan.

POLICY: INMATE CLASSIFICATION—DEFINITIONS

In accordance with the jail classification plan, inmates of the __________ County Jail will be assigned by the Classification Officer(s) or the jail Classification Committee to one of the following classification categories:

a. Maximum Security Classification,

b. Medium Security Classification, or

c. Minimum Security Classification.

Jail staff will implement custodial management practices and limit program participation to in-house or community-based programs with court concurrence for work or educational release consistent with the classification category assigned to an inmate.

‡Note that security is the broad category; custody level is a subcategory within a security level for the decision tree only.
### Definitions: Security Classification Categories

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<th>Decision Tree</th>
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<td><strong>Minimum Security</strong>&lt;br&gt;Includes inmates with designated custody levels of 6, 7, or 8. Those inmates assigned to a minimum security level (minimum, low minimum, very low) may be sentenced misdemeanants or selected sentenced felons. Inmates so assigned must have no holds or other pending court action against them. Minimum security inmates must display a cooperative attitude toward the staff and the rules and regulations of the facility. Minimum security inmates will not be considered an escape risk. Such inmates will be eligible for trustee and work crew status and work and educational release. Inmates in this security category will also be provided a maximum amount of out-of-cell recreation time.</td>
<td>Includes felon and misdemeanor, sentenced or unsentenced inmates with less serious current offenses and criminal histories. Inmates so assigned must have no holds or other pending court action against them. Minimum security inmates must display a cooperative attitude toward the staff and the rules and regulations of the facility. Minimum security inmates will not be considered an escape risk. Such inmates will be eligible for trustee and work crew status and work and educational release. Inmates in this security category will also be provided a maximum amount of out-of-cell recreation time.</td>
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<td><strong>Medium Security</strong>&lt;br&gt;Including inmates designated as custody levels 3, 4 or 5. Inmates assigned to the medium security level will include those sentenced misdemeanants and felons who do not qualify for minimum security and also who do not require a maximum level of security. In addition, inmates in the facility awaiting trial or sentencing and who do not require a maximum level of security will be placed in medium security. Medium security inmates should be treated as an escape risk and may prove to be slightly uncooperative or resistant to jail rules but may not display a significant disciplinary problem. These inmates will require a normal amount of staff supervision. The medium security inmates will be limited in their out-of-cell movement and will require continuous supervision; however, they may be allowed to participate in most in-house programs, including outside exercise. Medium Security Presentence inmates, custody level 5, are those who have no other factors that warrant a medium security level other than the fact that they are awaiting conviction and sentence. These inmates are temporarily assigned a medium security status and may be reclassified to minimum security upon sentencing.</td>
<td>Inmates assigned to the medium security level will include those sentenced and unsentenced misdemeanants and felons who do not qualify for minimum security and also who do not require a maximum level of security. Medium security inmates should be treated as an escape risk and may prove to be slightly uncooperative or resistant to jail rules, but may not display a significant disciplinary problem. These inmates will require a normal amount of staff supervision. The medium security inmates will be limited in their out-of-cell movement and will require continuous supervision, however they may be allowed to participate in most in-house programs, including outside exercise.</td>
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<td><strong>Maximum Security</strong>&lt;br&gt;Includes inmates designated as custody level 1 or Inmates who are assigned to maximum security will...</td>
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2. Inmates who are assigned to a maximum security level (close custody, high) will be those who have been charged with serious assaultive felony crimes or have a history of assaultive felony violent convictions. They may also have other holds or detainers concerning such types of crimes or may be individuals who have displayed a significant disciplinary problem within the facility or display a need of maximum amount of supervision.

Maximum security inmates may be allowed only a very limited amount of out-of-cell recreation time and such time will be under direct officer supervision. Their program participation will be limited. These inmates will not be allowed to associate with the general inmate population and will be housed in a selected area of the facility.

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<th>Special Management Housing</th>
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<td>Inmates who are assigned to a maximum security level (close custody, high) will be those who have been charged with serious assaultive felony crimes or have a history of assaultive felony violent convictions. They may also have other holds or detainers concerning such types of crimes or may be individuals who have displayed a significant disciplinary problem within the facility or display a need of maximum amount of supervision. Maximum security inmates may be allowed only a very limited amount of out-of-cell recreation time and such time will be under direct officer supervision. Their program participation will be limited. These inmates will not be allowed to associate with the general inmate population and will be housed in a selected area of the facility.</td>
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<td>Special management inmates include several subcategories (e.g., maximum security level 1 inmates, inmates who need protective custody or suicide watch, inmates who have demonstrated an inability to get along with the general population, and other kinds of inmates who require housing separate from the general population.) Inmates so identified will be allowed only very limited out-of-cell movement and any movement outside the cell will be under continuous direct supervision of correctional officers when appropriate. Their program participation will be limited to one-on-one situations within a secure area of the facility. Such inmates may not be allowed contact with any other inmates.</td>
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<th>Special Management Housing</th>
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<td>Special management inmates are inmates who need protective custody or suicide watch, inmates who have demonstrated an inability to get along with the general population, and other inmates who require housing separate from the general population. Inmates so identified will be allowed only very limited out-of-cell movement and any movement outside the cell will be under continuous direct supervision of correctional officers when appropriate. Their program participation will be limited to one-on-one situations within a secure area of the facility. Said inmates may not be allowed contact with any other inmates.</td>
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<th>High Risks:</th>
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<td>Inmates who are identified as high risk will be those who have demonstrated any of the following: Extremely high escape risks, assaultive toward staff or other inmates, severe emotional or mental problems presenting security concerns, extremely violent crimes, continuous and severe disciplinary problems, gang leaders, and may also include those who have had their life threatened by other inmates within the facility and those identified as suicidal.</td>
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<th>Special Condition:</th>
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<td>Inmates who are identified as having special conditions will be those who have demonstrated any of the following: Inmates having a need or condition that requires special attention such as physical or mental handicap, diet restrictions, alcohol or drug withdrawal, inmates needing protective custody, and so on. Inmates identified as having a special condition may not require housing separate from the general population but may require modified living quarters. A special condition or high-risk designation may or may not require a classification override. Such inmates shall be treated in accordance with the requirements of the special condition (e.g., special dietary restrictions). The amount of their out-of-cell movement, as well as participation in programs, will be determined on an individual basis.</td>
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Overrides: If it is determined that circumstances requiring a deviation from the primary classification instrument's security designation is warranted due to aggravating or mitigating circumstances, it will be designated an override. If it is necessary to make an override, use the override option on the classification instruments should be used and a note of the reason should be entered in the designated area. Approved agency override reasons include:

- Assaultive threats toward staff
- Increased risk of escape
- Serious institutional behavior history
- Inmate under investigation for additional crimes
- New charges may be added
- Hold, detainer for assaultive felony offense
- Known gang leader
- Suspected drug trafficker
- Inmate faced with lengthy prison term (20+ years)
- Mentally unstable
- Lengthy period of street time since last assaultive offense
- Notorious/particularly heinous offense
- Inmate well known to staff
- Developmentally disabled

Administrative Overrides: Administrative overrides are discretionary policy decisions made by the sheriff or jail commander. They may include policy regarding very high bonds, certain serious offenses, prison returnees for court, and so on, for which the administrative demands a certain classification assignment. (These may or may not be a reality in any particular jail.) If appropriate, designate below what issues constitute an administrative override. The classification officer should note administrative policy as the reason for the override.

Example: Department of Corrections inmates will be an automatic override, classified at least maximum security level 2 inmates per department policy.

POLICY: CLASSIFICATION OF FEMALES AND JUVENILES

The same classification policies and procedures will be applied to female and juvenile inmates, with the exception of the following separation requirements:

a. Female inmates will be housed separately from the adult male and juvenile population.

b. Juvenile inmates (16 and under) will be housed separately from the adult population and out of sight and sound of the adult population. (Refer to state juvenile custody laws and modify this policy draft as appropriate).

POLICY: INITIAL CLASSIFICATION

Initial Classification procedures have been designed to provide the intake/booking officer with an initial classification process. This process will assist the officer in identifying and making decisions regarding initial and immediate custodial management and treatment needs of inmates admitted to the __________ County Jail. The purpose of the process is to provide safe and secure temporary housing and identify any immediate emergency treatment needs. Inmates will be moved from a temporary holding area within 72 hours of reception.
Designated intake/booking officers will implement and complete initial classification procedures on inmates admitted to the __________ County Jail at the time of booking.

**DEFINITION: INITIAL CLASSIFICATION**

*Initial Classification* is intended to aid in the initial decision of the temporary cell assignment upon admission into the jail. A direct interview with the inmate and officer takes into consideration current charges, legal status, current physical/mental and medical condition, suicide and predatory risk, among others; in determining appropriate short-term housing placement.

**PROCEDURE: INITIAL CLASSIFICATION**

(This can become Appendix A of the P&P)

A. Upon receipt of an inmate, the correctional officers responsible for booking shall complete the initial/medical classification form in addition to other documents required at the time.

B. The booking officers shall make an immediate determination as to appropriate temporary housing assignment and appropriate supervision level for each new inmate.

   1. Temporary housing assignments for all adult male inmates will generally be limited to the ________________.

   2. Temporary cell assignments for all adult females will generally be limited to ________________.

   3. Temporary cell assignments for juveniles will be limited to ________________.

   4. In making the determination for initial housing assignment, consideration shall be given to any and all special needs of the inmate in an effort to avoid undue hardships or allow situations where the inmate may harm himself or others.

   5. On rare occasions an inmate may be housed in general population immediately after intake and initial classification but prior to primary classification. Next shift classification officers will review the inmate roster for any inmates not yet classified and take appropriate action.

   6. The booking officer shall also be responsible for making a determination as to any immediate needs of the new inmate including any emergency treatment that may be necessary. The officer shall notify the __________ in charge, the appropriate medical authority and make the appropriate referral.

   7. Within seventy-two (72) hours of admission, all relevant initial screening information will be forwarded by the booking department to the classification department, at which time all inmates will be subject to the primary classification process.
POLICY: PRIMARY CLASSIFICATION

Primary classification of an inmate shall occur within 72 hours of admission and prior to an inmate being moved to the general housing areas of the jail. This classification will be the lowest security level necessary to ensure community, staff, and inmate safety.

DEFINITION: PRIMARY CLASSIFICATION

The primary classification instrument and process provides fair and consistent guidelines in determining inmate assignments to housing areas, security levels, programs, and treatment services. Classification assures that such decisions are made for the mutual benefit of both the inmate and the facility and further ensures that proper documentation of such decisions is maintained. Primary classification considers security risk assessment and special conditions to develop a general housing assignment.

PROCEDURE: PRIMARY CLASSIFICATION PROCESS/INTERVIEW

The primary classification interview will be conducted by a classification officer for the purpose of determining the security level and the general housing assignment consistent with the designated security level.

Said interview must be completed as part of the primary classification and prior to placement in the general housing area of the facility.

In completing the primary classification interview, the classification officer is expected to

a. Explain the reason for the classification process;
b. Conduct a jail orientation, be willing to answer questions concerning the jail rules and regulations, and give inmate jail rules booklet;
c. Process inmate personal information with an appropriate degree of confidentiality;
d. Treat all inmates in a fair and consistent manner; and
e. Thoroughly and accurately complete the primary classification instrument and distribute copies as required.

After the inmate has received a primary security classification, the inmate will be interviewed by the (treatment/programs representative) ____________ within 10 days, for the purposes of determining appropriate treatment and programs consistent with their assessed needs and designated security level.

(treatment/programs representative) ___________________________ staff will provide the classification staff with any new information that has been identified at the time of the interview as impacting the inmate’s current security level.
POLICY: HOUSING AND PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

HOUSING

The objective of determining a housing assignment for each inmate shall be to place said inmate in a housing area that appears to be best suited for the individual's security category, program participation, and personal and medical/mental health needs.

(For indirect supervision jails/housing areas:) Inmates shall be assigned to discrete housing units to which no other security level is assigned.

OR

(For direct supervision jails/housing areas:) Maximum security inmates will be assigned housing with other maximum security inmates only. Medium and minimum security inmates may be housed together if direct supervision is available.

PROGRAMS AND TREATMENT

Inmates shall have the opportunity to participate in all treatment and self-help programs offered in the jail based on assessed need and assigned security and/or custody level.

PROCEDURE A: GENERAL HOUSING ASSIGNMENTS

Classification staff shall assign inmates to the least restrictive housing unit that appears to be consistent with the inmate's classification. When appropriate bed space matching the inmate's security or custody level is not available, the inmate shall be housed in the next security level, either above or below the inmate's security classification, and will be moved to the appropriate housing unit as soon as space becomes available.

EXERCISE NOTE: The housing plan should be added as an appendix to this document.
### Housing Plan Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pod/Block</th>
<th>Cell</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Security/Custody Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Medium and Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Max. Medium, or Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Max. Medium, or Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Max. Medium, or Minimum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROCEDURE B: PROGRAMS AND TREATMENT**

1. ________________ shall coordinate and oversee those areas of treatment and programs so designated by the ________________.

2. Program Services shall be any area agreed upon by the ________________ and the ________________. This may include but is not limited to:
   - Program orientation,
   - Education,
   - Religion,
   - Alcohol/substance abuse counseling,
   - Work/education release,
   - Community service work,
   - Employment skills, and
   - Vocational training.

**PROCEDURE C: PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION**

A. Referrals to programs may be done in any of the following manners:

1. Routinely, an inmate will be referred to in-house programs as a result of an interview with the __________ staff and subsequent recommendation.

2. Direct offer recommendations may be made based upon the primary classification interview, should the classification officer immediately identify any outstanding needs.

3. Any correctional officer may make a program recommendation during an inmate’s stay in this facility should a need be identified at a time after the classification process has been completed.

4. Program instructors will be notified of all approved inmates for program participation.
B. Program and Privilege Options

The inmate’s assigned security or custody level restricts eligibility for certain inmate programs and privileges. Programming and privileges that may be available and are assigned based on need and level of security are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision Tree</th>
<th>Additive Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High (Custody Level 1):</strong> No in-house program participation. Only mandatory commissary/personal items. No television, minimal reading materials, visits with legal council only, one hour out-of-cell activity daily. May receive one-on-one counseling as determined appropriate.</td>
<td><strong>Maximum Security:</strong> May participate in some or all inside-the-jail educational and treatment programs with other maximum security inmates only, pending approval by custody staff. Limited commissary, limited visitation, limited television, limited access to day room and outside recreation. May receive one-on-one counseling as determined appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Close (Custody Level 2):</strong> May participate in some or all inside-the-jail educational and treatment programs with other Level 2 inmates only, pending approval by custody staff. Limited commissary, limited visitation, limited television, limited access to day room and outside recreation. May receive one-on-one counseling as determined appropriate.</td>
<td><strong>Medium Security:</strong> May participate in all inside-the-jail educational and treatment programs. May receive standard access to day room, commissary, television privileges, standard visitation, and outside recreation time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium (Custody Levels 3 &amp; 4):</strong> May participate in all inside-the-jail educational and treatment programs. May receive standard access to day room, commissary, television privileges, standard visitation, and outside recreation time.</td>
<td><strong>Medium Security:</strong> May participate in all inside-the-jail educational and treatment programs. May receive standard access to day room, commissary and television privileges, standard visitation, and outside recreation time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium Security Pre-sentence (Custody Level 5):</strong> May participate in all inside-the-jail educational and treatment programs. May receive standard access to day room, commissary, television privileges, standard visitation, and outside recreation time. May be considered for inside trustee per department guidelines. May be screened for pretrial release program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum (Custody Level 6):</strong> May participate in all inside-the-jail programs. May have extra commissary and television privileges and may be considered for inside trustee. May have extra recreational time. May have one extra visit per week and may be considered for supervised work crews and alcohol/drug residential programs.</td>
<td><strong>Minimum Security:</strong> May participate in all inside-the-jail programs. May have extra commissary and television privileges and may be considered for inside or outside trustee. May have extra recreational time. May have one extra visit per week and may be considered for supervised work crews and alcohol/drug residential programs. May participate in work or school release program. May be considered for all alternative-to-incarceration programs including CSW, residential treatment, tether, day reporting, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum (Custody Levels 7 &amp; 8):</strong> May have all the privileges of Level 6 and may be considered for outside trustee. May participate in work or school release program. May be considered for all alternative-to-incarceration programs including community service work (CSW), residential treatment, tether, day reporting, etc.</td>
<td><strong>Special Conditions &amp; High Risk Inmates:</strong> Program availability is determined by the assigned security level restrictions and case-by-case circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Special Conditions &amp; High Risk Inmates:</strong> Program availability is determined by the assigned security level restrictions and case-by-case circumstances.</td>
<td><strong>Special Conditions &amp; High Risk Inmates:</strong> Program availability is determined by the assigned security level restrictions and case-by-case circumstances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
POLICY: CLASSIFICATION REVIEW

All inmates in the __________ County jail will have the opportunity to request a review of their classification assignment within ten (10) days of the original primary classification decision. A periodic classification review process will be established and maintained.

PROCEDURE A: CLASSIFICATION APPEAL

A. Any inmate who so desires may request a review of the classification assignment within ____ ten (10) (recommended) days of the primary classification or of reclassification to the classification department.

B. Upon receipt of the appeal notice the classification will be

1. Reviewed by the classification officer who conducted the original primary classification Interview, and/or
2. Reviewed by Classification Sergeant, and/or
3. Reviewed by the classification committee upon request of the classification sergeant.

C. Upon completion of a classification review at any of the three levels, the review and the results of the review shall be documented attached to the original classification form. The inmate will be notified of the decision in writing.

PROCEDURE B: CLASSIFICATION REVIEW

A. The purpose of the classification review procedure is to assure that the inmate’s classification assignment remains current. If no aggravating or mitigating event triggers a review, a fair and consistent periodic review of the inmate’s classification will occur at designated intervals during incarceration. Administrators, correctional staff, or program staff may submit a request for a classification review to the classification staff at any time. The classification staff will notify the appropriate person as to the status of the request.

B. Classification reviews will be conducted by:

1. Under normal circumstances, by a classification officer,
2. In cases of complex determination, the classification review may be referred to the Classification Committee and in some cases to the ____________________ or designate.

C. Automatic Classification Review (becomes Appendix C of the P&P)

1. All inmates who were classified while unsentenced will be reviewed at sentencing. It shall be the sole responsibility of the _________________ to notify the classification staff of inmates who have been sentenced or of additional charges or change in offense.
2. The classification staff will be notified of any major or minor disciplinary action by the shift supervisor. They will also receive the final disposition from the disciplinary hearing board for classification review.
3. Maximum Security Level 1 inmates shall be periodically reviewed at least every _____ days. (recommended every 15 days)
4. Maximum Security Level 2 inmates shall be periodically reviewed at least every ____ days. (eliminate item 3 if using the point scale; recommended every 30 days)

5. All Medium Security Level 3 & 4 inmates shall be periodically reviewed at least every ____ days. (recommended every 45 days)

6. Minimum Security inmates will be periodically reviewed at the discretion of classification staff.

7. Inmates shall be reviewed as a result of any change in legal status (charges added or dropped, detainers, etc.) or new information identified regarding such factors as gang affiliation, a change in mental health, protective custody needs, change in their work or program record, etc.

8. The ____________________ shall be responsible to assure that the classification reviews are conducted properly.

D. All classification reviews shall be documented on the Classification Review Form. Said form shall indicate the date that the classification review was done and the results of the review.

---

**POLICY: CLASSIFICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE PLAN REVIEW**

The Classification Policy and Procedure Plan will be reviewed annually to assure it remains consistent with current operations and applicable to the physical plant.

**PROCEDURE: PLAN REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

A. The classification committee shall review and evaluate classification policy and procedure relative to its effectiveness and appropriateness, a minimum of annually, and forward their comments, suggestions, and concerns to the __________.

B. The ____________________ will review the comments, suggestions, and concerns from the classification committee and make the appropriate modifications to the plan or the classification policy and procedure.
Sample Classification Inmate Interview Form

_____________ County Jail

Classification Interview Form

Date _____________ Inmate # _______________   Interviewer _______________

Name: ______________________________ DOB: ____________  SS# ____________

Do you request protective custody? ___ Yes  ___ No  Reason: ___________________

Are you currently on probation or parole? ___ Yes  ___ No

Ever escaped or walked away from custody? ___ Yes  ___ No Where?: __________

Ever receive disciplinary write-ups in jail? ___ Yes  ___ No  For what and where?

______________________________________________________________________

Ever been an informant? ___ Yes  ___ No  For whom? _________________________

Ever been charged with a sex crime? ___ Yes  ___ No Where?: ___________

Ever assaulted/battered anyone? ___ Yes  ___ No  When? ___________________

Any medical/mental problems you have not already identified with staff? ___ Yes  ___ No

Explain: __________________________________________ Medical staff notified? ___ Yes  ___ No

Sexual preference:   ___ Heterosexual  ___ Homosexual  ____Bisexual

Any known enemies in the jail? ___ Yes  ___ No  Who? ______________________

Any codefendants in the jail?  ___ Yes  ___ No  Who? ______________________

Are you a gang member? ___ Yes  ___ No  Which gang? ______________________

Do you have any outstanding warrants or pending charges? ___ Yes  ___ No

What are they and where from? ___________________________________________

Do you use an alias (go by another name)? ___ Yes  ___ No  Alias: ___________

Interviewer comments: _________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________
Staffing Analysis Formula

General rule of thumb = 1 staff person for each 125 inmates in general population.

Staffing Formula:
1. # Primaries per/wk (% of admissions) x Time per Primary Classification. = Total Mins / 60 = Total hrs/wk
2. # Reviews per/wk (1:2.5 ratio to primaries) x Time per = Total Minutes ÷ 60 = Total hrs/wk
3. Housing Assignments per/wk x Time per = Total Minutes ÷ 60 = Total hrs/wk
4. Other job duties per/wk x Time per = Total Minutes ÷ 60 = Total hrs/wk

Adding items 1 thru 4 = Total Time per week ÷ working hrs in shift = total number of staff needed to maintain classification unit

Other Factors:
- Shift Spread of Workload
- Staffing classification unit 7 days versus 5 days
- Vacation/sick, etc., backup
CHAPTER 7

HOUSING PLANS AND DIFFERENTIATED INMATE MANAGEMENT (DIM)

The Basic Housing Plan

Some small jails implement a very basic form of a housing plan, thinking that their limited housing options make it impossible to implement a fully developed housing plan with all of the features and options available to large jails. Most jails benefit from implementing a more thoughtful housing plan. This chapter presents the basic features of a housing plan, addresses some additional features, and concludes with an examination of a fully developed housing plan. We also examine the benefits of such a plan for a small facility.

The purpose of drawing up a housing plan is to determine which type of inmate is best supervised in what part of the facility. Even small facilities may have housing units that are more suited to one type of inmate than another.

Separating Custody Levels

The first and most basic step in creating a facility housing plan is to separate inmates with different custody levels into different housing units. The goal is for minimum custody inmates to be housed only with other minimum custody inmates, for medium custody inmates to only be housed with other medium custody inmates, and so on. Table 3 reviews definitions of the different custody levels.
### Table 3. Formal Custody Level Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmates pose little threat to community, institutional safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Current charge nonviolent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No prior violent felony convictions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Only minor institutional behavior problems if any</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No suspicion of need for special handling or alerts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmates pose moderate threat to community, institutional safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Current charge violent, serious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Previous conviction(s) for violent felonies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Possible history of institutional behavior problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Possible alert concerns (e.g., escape or assaultive risk)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmates pose high threat to community, institutional safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Current charge violent felony</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Previous conviction(s) for violent felonies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Extremely long sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- History of institutional behavior problems (including assaults against other inmates and staff)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Variety of special handling alerts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The formal definitions shown above are somewhat technical in nature. In discussing facility housing plans, it is sometimes helpful to consider less technical but more useful definitions of custody levels that are grounded in inmate behavior patterns. These informal definitions are shown in Table 4.

### Table 4. Informal Custody Level Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmate not interested in breaking facility rules</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Concerned with completing sentence, getting out on bond without creating problems with other inmates of staff.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tend to keep a low profile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Intent on finding most comfortable conditions, securing privileges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lower levels of supervision unlikely to result in breaking rules</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmate more immature or unsocialized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Concerned with becoming “the boss of the rock”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Intimidates other inmates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Plans ways to circumvent rules, staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pursuit of selfish interests often leads to trouble with staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Without close supervision, secure housing, likely to break rules</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmate likely to try to manipulate, control, dominate others, staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Likely to resort to violence, willing to confront staff as means of achieving dominance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Impulsively rebellious, violent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Likely to develop plans of escape or attack</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Likely to break facility rules even if securely house, closely supervised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, medium and maximum custody inmates tend to be predators, whereas minimum custody inmates tend to be nonviolent.
Considering the informal definitions above, it is easy to see the advantages of housing inmates who are at the different custody levels separately. Once the classification system has identified the custody level of an inmate, it makes sense to house that inmate in a living area that is constructed, staffed, supervised, programmed, and has a privilege level consistent with expected behaviors. For example, if part of the facility has weaker physical security and is more difficult to supervise, then it is logical to use this area for only those inmates who, as a general rule of thumb, need very little supervision to keep them in line, that is, minimum custody inmates. If jail staff is limited, it makes sense to concentrate staff in an area that is populated with inmates who will only behave if they are closely supervised, such as medium or maximum custody inmates.

**Separating the custody levels also balances the power struggles within the housing unit.** The end result is fewer thefts of commissary, assaults, and threats because the weaker inmates will not be living side by side with the stronger inmates. There are likely to be fewer weapons violations because inmates generally only arm themselves if they are afraid. If the minimum and medium custody inmates feel safer in their housing units, they are less likely to make or use a weapon.

**Jails that separate custody levels also experience a degree of protection against liability arising from lawsuits that focus on a “failure to protect.”** An old style separation system may end up housing a young, timid 18-year-old male with an older, streetwise, career criminal with a violent history, if, for instance, they were both arrested for driving with a suspended license and it is the practice of the facility to lodge all misdemeanors in the same housing unit. If the older inmate assaults the younger inmate while they are housed together, the jail may be sued for failure to protect the younger inmate. A more valid classification system would have identified the young first-time offender as a minimum custody inmate and the older, three-time loser as a medium, and then housed them separately, avoiding the assault and the subsequent lawsuit.
Even if a housing plan can accomplish only the separation of inmates into the three basic levels, it can still produce a marked reduction in unwanted inmate behavior. The goal should be to separate custody levels as much as possible and never to mix minimums with maximums. Some smaller facilities with limited numbers of housing units will need to consider potential solutions to this limitation by considering types of housing and supervision styles as discussed below.

**Housing Styles**

When designing a housing plan, it is important keep in mind the types of cells in a jail. Tables 5, 6, and 7 provide cell construction, cell type, and cell arrangement definitions.

### Table 5. Cell Construction Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Table 6. Cell Type Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell Type</th>
<th>Occupants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Constructed to be occupied by only one inmate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double</td>
<td>Designed for two occupants or a single cell that was later double bunked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi</td>
<td>Constructed for multiple occupancy (4, 6, 8, 12 occupants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorm</td>
<td>Intended to hold a large number of inmates in a large room or ward. May house any number of inmates, with 54 to 72 most common</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. Cell Arrangement Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell Layout</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Podular</td>
<td>Individual cells grouped around a rectangular, triangular, or circular central space. Cells open into dayroom, share recreation space, classrooms, supervision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear</td>
<td>Individual cells distributed in a line along a hallway or catwalk. Inmates have to leave the housing unit to go to a dayroom, recreation yard, classrooms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Supervision Styles**

Just as there are different styles of inmate housing, there are different ways of supervising inmates. **Supervision style is the primary technique that facilities use to manage the behavior of their inmate populations.** An understanding of supervision styles will assist in the formulation of a workable housing plan. Table 8 provides the definitions and characteristics of each style.

Table 8. Supervision Style Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervision Type</th>
<th>Facility Type/Custody Level</th>
<th>Officer Placement/Ratio</th>
<th>Inmate Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Commonly used in podular facilities</td>
<td>Stationed in housing unit, generally in dayroom or immediately adjacent</td>
<td>Direct physical contact with the inmates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Commonly used in podular facilities</td>
<td>Stationed outside dayroom or housing unit</td>
<td>Through windows, sometimes augmented by video monitors, listening devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermittent or Linear</td>
<td>Linear facilities</td>
<td>Officers’ workstations remote from housing unit</td>
<td>Officer goes into housing unit intermittently to walk through/past it. Leaves inmates largely unsupervised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>Used with very high-risk inmates, e.g., actively attempting suicide</td>
<td>Supervisor/inmate ratio very small (1:1, 2, or 3)</td>
<td>Constant supervision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Privilege Levels and Principles of Differentiated Inmate Management (DIM).

One aspect of a well-developed housing plan consists of differential privilege levels that are assigned to inmates. One approach to determining inmate privileges is called Differentiated Inmate Management (DIM). This is when an administrator carefully assigns privileges and living conditions to each housing unit in the facility with an eye to increasing inmates’ motivation to behave well. The minimum custody areas may be given better privileges and living conditions than the medium custody areas, and the medium custody area may be given a slightly better set of living conditions than the maximum areas. Inmates should understand that bad behavior can result in reclassification to a housing unit that is less pleasant than their current situation and that good behavior will result in being “upgraded” to a better housing unit at their next reclassification.

All inmates living in general population should know the privileges that they would forfeit if their behavior caused them to be moved to a segregation unit or to a higher custody level. Table 9 defines privileges according to custody and security levels.

Table 9. Privilege Levels and Living Conditions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Custody</th>
<th>Privileges and Living Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>No in-house program participation, minimal commissary or personal items, minimal reading materials, visits with legal council only, minimal out-of-cell activity. May receive one-on-one counseling as appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>May participate in some or all inside-the-jail educational &amp; treatment programs with other maximum inmates only pending approval by custody staff. Limited commissary, visitation, TV, access to day room, outside recreation. May receive one-on-one counseling as determined appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Level 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>May participate in all inside-the-jail educational &amp; treatment programs. Standard access to day room, commissary, TV, visitation, outside recreation time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>May participate in all inside-the-jail programs. May have extra commissary, TV. May be considered for inside trustee. May have extra recreational time. May have one extra visit per week. May be considered for supervised work crews, alcohol/drug residential programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>Level 7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>May have all privileges available. May be considered for outside trustee. May participate in work or school release program. May be considered for all alternative-to-incarceration programs, e.g., residential treatment, tether, day reporting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Even within custody levels it is possible to assign varying degrees of privileges. For example, if a facility has two housing units for minimum custody inmates, inmates in unit A could be granted more privileges than those in unit B. This provides behavior incentives to inmates in both units to maintain their good standing and to increase their privileges by complying with rules and codes of behavior. **Privileged housing units are sometimes called “honor pods” because good behavior is required to live there.** Introducing an honor pod within a custody level improves the behavior of inmates in the honor pod and improves the behavior of the inmates in some of the other pods as well, because those inmates aspire to be relocated to the honor pod.

Table 10 lists privileges that may be structured into a housing plan as tools for motivating inmates to behave well. This is just a suggested list. Keep in mind that to people in a confinement setting, everything is a potential privilege, even the view from one’s window.

**Table 10. Potential Privileges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Privileges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Plant</strong></td>
<td>Occupancy of cell (single, double, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Size of housing unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type of fixtures, finishes, and floor covering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type, amount, and comfort level of furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lighting, control of it, and hours of operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amount of time allowed in dayroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inmate’s ability to control access to dayroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visiting/Telephone</strong></td>
<td>Frequency of visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length of visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contact, noncontact, video visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephones in cell or only in dayroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hours of operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collect or prepayment options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recreation/Activities</strong></td>
<td>Frequency of access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Length of access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type of activities available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type of equipment allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to games, equipment, or materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work options, desirable jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recreation readily available in unit or other area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access to library or computer lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quality, quantity, selection of meals, commissary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Availability of snacks, drinks in housing unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dining location in cell, dayroom, dining room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency of ordering commissary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amount of money permissible to spend on commissary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food/Commissary</strong></td>
<td>Quality, quantity, selection of meals, commissary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Availability of snacks, drinks in housing unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dining location in cell, dayroom, dining room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency of ordering commissary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amount of money permissible to spend on commissary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10, cont’d.

| Entertainment                      | TV hours available                  |
|                                   | TV located in cell, dayroom, both   |
|                                   | Entertainment value of TV content   |
|                                   | Availability of movies and videos   |
|                                   | Availability of radio, music        |
|                                   | Special events, concerts in housing unit |
|                                   | Tournaments or contests in chess, cards, other activities |
| Other Privileges                  | Amount of personal property allowed |
|                                   | Locked storage containers allowed   |
|                                   | Ability to personalize cell         |
|                                   | Clothing options                   |
|                                   | Mobility within the facility; type of escort required |
|                                   | Time off sentence, furloughs        |

It is possible to track the number of inmate disciplinary infractions in each individual housing unit, and then use that information to determine which housing units are the best behaved. Divide that figure by the number of inmates living in each housing unit to get an index of incidents per population. If the classification system and housing plan work as intended, minimum custody areas and program areas will have the best behavior, followed by the medium, maximum, and then the segregation areas. **Assessing incidents per population segment can help a jail administrator set goals for inmate rule violation reductions and then determine which housing units were successful at reaching those goals.** This type of study pinpoints which housing units are not behaving as expected and allows administrators to revisit the housing plan to devise solutions to the problems identified.

**Housing Plan Worksheet**

With all of the elements defined as shown above, the housing plan can be assembled. Table 11 is a Housing Plan Worksheet that assists in planning the building types, supervision levels, and privileges for inmates at all custody levels.
Table 11. Housing Plan Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum Custody</th>
<th>Medium Custody</th>
<th>Maximum Custody</th>
<th>Segregation Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Plant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Supervision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Privileges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consider each row of the table separately, keeping in mind the principles discussed herein regarding separation of custody levels and the types of cells and supervision that are optimal for each. Keep in mind also the relative costs of the various types of construction and supervision so as to avoid overspending wherever possible (e.g., by placing minimum security inmates in more expensive hard cells or most labor intensive categories of supervision). Complete the worksheet by naming housing units that are most appropriate to house the different custody levels of inmates and types of privileges that are applicable.

A More Complete Housing Plan

This section provides guidance for “fleshing out” the bare bones housing plan developed so far. These enhancements to the plan include discussion of the importance of segregation units and program areas.

The Importance of Segregation Areas

General population housing units are only for those inmates who are abiding by the rules of the facility. Inmates who do not abide by the rules or who otherwise find it difficult to live in general population should be removed from general population and placed into segregation.
The above principle, once adopted, will have a very noticeable impact on the housing units of any facility. Jail administrators can set the standard of behavior that they expect from the inmates in general population and then enforce those expectations with the aid of a carefully designed inmate discipline policy. Setting high expectations for behavior in general population and developing inmate discipline policies will only work if some beds are designated as segregation units.

Three types of segregation, discussed below, are commonly used in jails. Some small jails do not need three separate housing units for the three types. It is possible to have one segregation unit that services all three types of segregated inmate.

**Disciplinary Segregation**

Inmates who violate the rules of any jail may need to be removed from general population and held in segregation to receive sanctions appropriate to the offense. Minor rule violations are best confronted while the inmate is still in the housing unit, but violations that result in a serious disruption of the orderly operation of the facility may need to be handled more assertively. **Inmates should know that if they violate the rules of the facility, they will experience a significant loss of privileges and diminished living conditions.** These inmates need to be removed from general population when they receive these sanctions, because their continued presence in general population will be disruptive to the inmates who are trying to obey the rules. **Individual departments are encouraged to contact their legal advisors to determine what sanctions can be enforced and what the living conditions in disciplinary segregation can be. Departments should also seek legal advice concerning the due process requirements for facility inmate disciplinary procedures.**
Administrative Segregation

Inmates are admitted to an Administrative Segregation Unit (ASU) when the continued presence of an inmate in general population poses a serious threat to themselves or others, threat to the property of the facility, or if they

- Repeatedly commit rule violations, even if they are not presently on discipline;
- Would be assigned to another segregation area but cannot be placed there because of hazards, keep separates, behavior, or other conflicts;
- Pose a clear escape risk;
- Repeatedly attempt to manipulate their cell location;
- Are chronically disruptive;
- Are under investigation for a criminal violation that occurred while in the facility;
- Attempt to organize gang activity within the facility;
- Have a history of using violence against staff or other inmates, especially if weapons have been involved;
- Are a new admission to the jail with a past history that suggests the need for placement in ASU until present behavior indicates safe placement into general population; and
- Have a charge or bond that suggests the need for placement in ASU.

These inmates are not placed in the ASU for punishment but to preserve the safety and orderly operation of the facility. If their privileges are restricted, it must be to protect valid institutional security interests and not to punish. For instance, the decision might be made to not allow the administratively segregated inmate a television set because of the risk that it might become a weapon or source of weapons in the hands of a dangerous inmate. An administratively segregated inmate’s movement outside of the unit
might be limited not as punishment but because it is in the best interest of the security of the institution. Typically administrative segregation placements are made against the will of the inmates, and facilities should consult with their local legal authorities to determine what due process rights need to be provided in each individual jurisdiction.

Protective Custody

Protective custody is a housing unit that provides for segregation of inmates who could live in general population except that they may be victimized or threatened by other inmates. Because of their charges, personal appearance, personality, mental weakness, or some other reason, the other inmates may intimidate or victimize them. These are inmates who, if placed in general population, may have to be moved for their own protection. If there is not a separate place for them, they end up moving frequently from one housing unit to another in a search for cellmates who will not harass them.

Generally the privileges for an inmate in protective custody are not too restricted and the living conditions are as good as general population because it is in the interests of the facility for the inmates placed there to want to remain there. It is technically a segregation area because the inmates are being held apart from general population, but it is not generally punitive and often is voluntary on the part of the inmates.

The Importance of Program Housing Units

Another powerful means of influencing positive behavior within housing units is inmate programming. Programming includes organized classes or programs dealing with selected topics such as life skills, domestic violence, anger management, general equivalency diploma (GED) testing, or drug abuse. Ideally a pod or housing unit is devoted to one type of programming, such as an education pod, sober living unit, or religious or “God pod.” We acknowledge that this may not be possible in very small jails. Experience has shown that programming is a very effective way of influencing inmate behavior.
Inmates who are busily involved in some type of program, or even some type of jail industries job, are much less likely to be discipline problems than inmates who are idle. Programming is possibly even more effective than privileges at controlling unwanted inmate behavior.

**A Fully Developed Housing Plan: Principles of Behavior Modification**

This section discusses how a fully developed housing plan can be an extremely useful tool for managing the behavior of the inmate population. Jail administrators often base jail goals and objectives on their mission statement. It is common to see administrators set goals such as “reduce assaults on staff by 25%” or “reduce the number of weapons violations by 50% in the coming year.” A savvy jail administrator will use the facility housing plan as the first course of action in achieving these goals. We present below additional housing plan principles followed by some examples.

The following summarizes selected principles already discussed and then presents more detailed approaches to housing plan design.

A formal housing plan defines the custody designation for each housing unit in the facility. This housing plan provides for the placement of minimum, medium, and maximum custody inmates as well as for special classification areas such as medical, mental health, disciplinary and administrative segregation, and protective custody units. Ideally, inmates will not be mixed in housing units with those of other custody levels. Generally, minimum custody inmates will never be housed with maximum custody inmates.

The structure, supervision, programming, and privilege levels of the housing units should be aligned with the custody levels of the inmates housed in these levels.

Inmates who exhibit a willingness and ability to obey the rules of the facility are allowed to remain in general population. Inmates whose presence in
general population is disruptive may be removed and placed in disciplinary segregation, administrative segregation, or protective custody.

All inmates who remain in general population, whether minimum, medium, or maximum custody, will be afforded privileges and living conditions sufficient to convince them that it is in their own best interests to remain in general population. All inmates should be aware of the privileges that they would lose if they were reclassified to a higher custody level and of privileges that they would gain if they were reclassified to a lower custody level.

Security staff should be encouraged to document inmate behavior, and this behavior should have a major impact on housing placements, program eligibility, future prison classification, and release conditions.

The idea of behavior modification is incorporated into the above housing plan principles. The goal of this aspect of the housing plan is to design a set of living conditions that motivates the average inmate to cooperate with the staff because this will serve their own best self interests. Behavior modification is based on the principle that any behavior that is followed by positive reinforcement will tend to be repeated, and any behavior that is followed by negative reinforcement will tend to diminish. Therefore, if good behavior is rewarded by allowing inmates to enjoy the privileges that are associated with living in general population, then they will continue to behave well so that they can retain those privileges. If poor behavior is immediately punished by a loss of privileges and movement to an uncomfortable housing unit (such as disciplinary segregation), then the inmate may avoid the poor behavior.

Sample Housing Plans for Small Facilities

Figure 10 is a simple floor plan for a 50-bed facility. We use this illustration as the basis for a discussion of alternatives and principles that may apply in small jails.
Figure 10. Sample Small Jail Housing/Floor Plan

It should be clear that the simple floor plan above, even with only four housing units, offers many possibilities for developing a housing plan. Each housing unit may have multiple considerations as discussed below.

- **Housing Unit A**: This dorm-style housing area is a good choice for housing minimum custody inmates. Minimum custody inmates typically get along better in groups than higher custody inmates. They generally exhibit fewer attempts to dominate others or behavior intended to identify the “boss of the rock,” which are contributing factors in many fights and assaults. Dorm settings are thus more appropriate for minimum custody inmates. However, it is important for inmates placed in this housing unit to be satisfied with living there and not angling to be relocated elsewhere. If the privileges across housing units are identical, some inmates may prefer to live in unit B where
they share a cell with only one other inmate or even unit C, where they do not have to share a cell at all. Poor behavior can result if inmates attempt to manipulate their way into what they perceive as a more desirable living space. The solution to this problem is to incorporate enough privileges in housing unit A to override the desire for a single cell.

- **Housing Unit B.** This style of housing is often a good choice for medium custody inmates. If misbehaviors result from having all 20 inmates out in the dayroom at the same time, the administrator may use the option of running separate dayrooms. For example, inmates in the six cells along the south wall can use the dayroom while the inmates in the other four cells are locked up and visa versa. Such split dayroom scheduling allows the jail to address other potential problems such as keep separates. If a medium custody inmate living in B wants to move to A or C, he might simply claim to need to be kept separate from another inmate in B. Rather than moving this inmate to a minimum or maximum custody housing unit, he could be left in B but use the other dayroom and thus be separated from the enemy. Split dayroom schedules also facilitates the separation of high-medium inmates from low-medium inmates. Many classifications make this kind of distinction. Split dayroom schedules also allow certain mediums to be considered an honor pod with more privileges than the others. The honor pod could have access to the dayroom 10 hours a day, for example, compared with just 6 hours for the second group, in addition to more access to other privileges. This type of DIM may enhance the behavior of both groups, as some inmates may work to stay in the honor pod, whereas others may use good behavior to obtain relocation to the honor pod. A split dayroom schedule also provides the option of housing maximum custody inmates in B along with the medium custody inmates without sacrificing the desired separation between the custody levels.

- **Housing Unit C.** This housing unit is ideal for housing maximum custody inmates or inmates who need to be segregated for some reason. This unit also can be turned into a multiple-use unit by running separate dayroom
schedules for all five of the cells. In theory, this small jail could have two maximum custody inmates who share the dayroom for several hours a day, one protective custody inmate who is in the dayroom alone for several hours a day, one inmate on disciplinary lockdown who only has access to the dayroom for a brief shower period, and one administratively segregated inmate who has access to the dayroom only when no one else is using it. Small jails should not underestimate the importance of having certain cells set aside for segregation, as this is often the only way to enforce the standards of behavior expected of the inmates in general population.

Depending on population pressures, unit C may also be an ideal place to house the female population. If this particular jail is not running at capacity, consideration could be given to setting aside some cells in B as medium, maximum, and segregation for males, and then using C for the female population. However, in practice, many small jails may simply hold all females together in a small dorm such as unit D. This has the major disadvantage of not allowing females to be separated by custody level.

- **Housing Unit D.** As mentioned above, in many small jails this housing unit would be used for housing the female population. This would fail to provide for separation of the custody levels. It may well be that this small jail has a maximum custody female so infrequently that other arrangements, such as housing the occasional maximum custody female at the jail in a neighboring county, can be made. This small dorm would perhaps best be used as an honor pod for minimum custody inmates or perhaps as a housing location for the jail’s inmate workers. The use of this unit would depend on how close to capacity the jail is and the number of inmates typically housed at each custody level.

- **Officers’ Workstation.** It is also important to consider the placement of the officers’ workstation in the housing plan. Workstations are typically a focal point or orientation point. It is important to arrange this to have easy access to the computer, phone, video monitors, control panel, or other fixed equipment.
Workstations should not be configured in such a way that the focal point of the officer is in the opposite direction of the housing units that require the most supervision. In the sample floor plan, if unit D houses the minimum honor pod and B and C house the maximum custody or segregated inmates, the facility would avoid having the focal point of the workstation facing unit D as the officer would be facing away from those inmates who need the most supervision. Consideration should also be given to the placement of devices in the workstation, such as bulletin boards or banks of monitors that may impede the line of sight. Video monitors should be installed on the south wall of the workstation so that they are pointed toward the high custody housing units. However, if the installation of the bank of monitors obstructs the officer’s vision into the housing units, more harm than good is being done.

Handling Overcrowding

Many small jails are seriously overcrowded. Many administrators who face this condition assume that this makes it impossible to follow the housing plan. This is not necessarily the case. However, we acknowledge that maintaining a good housing plan in an overcrowded jail is often difficult.

The above sample floor plan is used as a basis for discussion with unit A housing minimum custody males, B medium custody males, C maximum custody and segregated males, and D for females. Suppose that A is full and B has two double bunked cells with only one inmate in each so that it has room for two inmates. Waiting in Intake are two inmates who have been classified as minimum custody and who are ready for a housing placement. Several options for handling the situation are presented below.

- **Option 1:** Move the minimum custody inmates into the open bunks in unit B. This leaves two minimum custody inmates sharing a cell with a medium custody inmate in a medium custody unit.
• **Option 2:** Move the two medium custody inmates who do not have cell mates into the same cell to open up one 2-person cell in unit B. The two minimum custody inmates can then be moved into the same 2-person cell, but they would still be in a medium housing unit sharing the dayroom with medium custody inmates.

• **Option 3:** Reclassify the inmates in unit A. If the two minimum custody inmates have been acting more like medium custody inmates or have a changed charge status that is more serious, it may be a good choice to reclassify them as medium and move them to B. This would create two openings in A. Another possibility is to seek two inmates in unit A who qualify for early or supervised release, if the jail has such a program.

• **Option 4:** If the jail classification instrument has several subcategories of minimum (as does the decision tree classification instrument), then if available, two high-minimum inmates from unit A could be moved to unit B. Because B unit can be divided into separate dayrooms (low-medium and high-medium), this facilitates another option such that the two high-minimum inmates could be housed with the low-medium dayroom group in unit B.

• **Option 5:** If permitted by state jail guidelines, the two incoming minimum inmates could be temporarily housed in unit A on stackable bunks or on the floor. If there is a difference in the privileges afforded to the inmates in each unit, the inmates themselves may prefer to spend a brief amount of time on the floor of a more highly desired housing unit with better behaved cellmates than be housed in a unit with fewer privileges and poorly behaved inmates. In most jails, the average length of stay of minimum custody inmates is much shorter than for higher custody inmates because their charges are less serious. For the sake of argument, if one inmate was released from unit A every other day, then the two new inmates moving into A would stay on the floor only four days, which for many inmates is a small price to pay for a more desirable set of living conditions.
Variations of these options are available to help the small jail deal with overcrowding in the housing unit. As a general rule, it is better to overcrowd the minimum custody housing unit and protect the higher custody units if possible. Making housing assignments in an overcrowded jail requires more adjustments, but they can be done in such a way that the principles of the housing plan are still upheld. **It is often not the overcrowding itself that undermines the housing plan, but the inability or unwillingness of a jail to allocate the extra time, adjustments, and thought that are required to manage housing in an overcrowded jail.**

**A Compromised Housing Plan**

Some very small jails may only have one housing unit for male inmates and one for female inmates. If these housing units are dorms, it is impossible to separate the custody levels. There are other situations in small jails where the existing physical plant requires many compromises. This often leads administrators of small jails to ask, "Is there any reason to do classification if my jail is too small for a housing plan?" The answer to that question is a resounding yes. Identifying inmates gives staff the additional margin of safety that comes from knowing with whom they are dealing. The classification system and housing plan can still be used to track behavioral and population data, which can be used to inform future building plans, early release decisions, and to make program and escort/transfer decisions.

**Conclusion**

This chapter provided ideas on how to use a facility housing plan to improve inmate behavior. The discussion does not exhaust the topic by any means, but it should stimulate creative solutions to some of the problems typically faced in small jail situations. Security staff should be involved in any plans for changing an existing housing plan. In small jails particularly, security staff generally has strong feelings about where inmates should be housed or the amount and types of privileges inmates that should be granted. Including staff in
the discussion and planning stages of devising a new housing plan will dramatically increase their acceptance of the changes.
CHAPTER 8

PILOT TESTING THE SELECTED CLASSIFICATION METHOD

Once the planning group has selected a basic OJC method (additive points, decision tree, or other), it is prudent to conduct a pilot test using the jail as the setting for a real-life experiment or dry run of the new classification system. The goals of a pilot test are to provide a stringent test of the selected method, to make refinements as needed, and to assess whether the method suits the needs of the jail. Subsidiary goals include establishing the likely changes in percentages of maximum, medium, and minimum custody levels that will be produced by the new system. These are critical because substantial changes in these percentages may require adjustments to the housing plan.

Briefly, the sequential phases of a pilot test include the following:

- Selecting the new desired classification method (decision tree or additive points; see Chapters 4 and 9);
- Selecting the new classification instruments, forms, and policies and procedures;
- Drawing an appropriate inmate sample;
- Collecting data with the new classification instruments;
- Preparing the data for statistical analysis;
- Analyzing the data and producing a written report of the findings; and
- Making adjustments and refinements (if needed) to the instruments.

A pilot test is essentially a low-cost, efficient strategy by which to assess the effectiveness of new classification policies and procedures, refine the new procedures as needed, provide an opportunity for further input from key stakeholders so as to achieve greater buy-in or commitment from them. A pilot test also fulfills a political purpose by reducing the anxiety of resistant managers.
and helping them to appreciate that the system is easy to use and learn and that its benefits may be substantial. When stakeholders observe firsthand the successful use of the new classification system and discuss it with staff, this may engender a greater commitment to the new classification system. Critical stakeholders can evaluate the pilot study results and have the opportunity to suggest refinements.

**Main Steps in Conducting a Pilot Test**

The following is an overview of the main steps in conducting a pilot test of a new objective classification procedure. For those wishing more information on pilot tests of classification systems, papers by Alexander and Austin (1992) and Brennan (1993) provide useful overviews.

**Finalizing the New Classification Instruments and Forms**

If a standard national prototype classification has been selected or a classification instrument has been borrowed from another facility, local officers often wish to add locally important data elements to these prototype forms. The transition team must ensure that the response formats and wording of all questions are unambiguous, clearly coded, and ready for statistical analysis. The new classification forms and decision process should be reviewed and briefly tested in “live” conditions before embarking on the pilot test.

**Drawing an Appropriate Sample**

Care should be given to the exact source of the sample, what it represents, and how it is drawn. Alexander and Austin (1992) provided an extensive discussion of sampling approaches for jails and prisons.

**Sample Size**

Two kinds of samples are possible. A more rigorous sampling approach is appropriate when a full-scale statistical validation is planned. This requires a fairly large sample. The second sampling approach does not contemplate a full statistical validation but is aimed only at assessing ease of use, identification of
user problems, and providing a preliminary assessment of the percentages of inmates that fall into the major custody levels in the new system.

A full-blown statistical validation test usually requires samples of around 300–400 inmates. Such validation tests involve statistical comparisons of the custody classes (maximum, medium, and minimum) to assess the significance of behavioral infraction rate differences between the groups. Such large samples are needed to support statistical tests of significance that are required to demonstrate validity. However, sample sizes of this magnitude are difficult to achieve in small jails, and we have noted that small jails rarely conduct full-blown statistical validation procedures. Another reason for this is that several previous validation studies have already been conducted of the two standard methods (additive points and decision tree). Thus, the smaller jails often choose to rely on these replicated findings from larger jails. Clearly, this gives only indirect support for the validity of these two systems in the particular jurisdiction of the small jail. The safest approach is always to conduct a full-blown validation. Two additional practical reasons for avoiding complex validation studies are that most small jails have difficulty reaching the sample size needed and also do not have access to the statistical expertise needed to conduct such a test. The monograph by Alexander and Austin (1992) provides more details on the more complex validation testing.

The second and simpler approach tests ease of use and practicality issues and estimates the percentages of inmates classified by the new method into maximum, medium, and minimum custody levels. This simpler type of test can be achieved with a much smaller sample of 100–200 inmates. This is the usual approach in small jails. The technique involves gradually building the sample by selecting inmates randomly from the daily jail roster over a period of time until the required number is reached.
Drawing a Stock Population Sample

To achieve a representative sample of the population, it is important to obtain a stock population sample by drawing a random sample from the jail's daily roster. It is important to eliminate from the sample those inmates who stay in jail for only a few hours. Such short-term inmates are often called a “revolving door” population as they enter the jail for a few hours and often do not enter the general population. They may be released before coming up for primary classification because their offense is so minor.

The aim of a stock population sample is to identify those inmates who are likely to stay long enough to require full-scale classification as they enter the general population. This requires a rule that specifies a time cut-off in hours or days to select names from the daily roster to enter the pilot sample. Basically staff obtain the daily roster and randomly select names from this list. Only those inmates who exceed the established cut-off time will enter the pilot sample.

Such jail rosters may reach several thousand for large jails and thus large jails may often use systematic random sampling (use a random start and then select every 10th or 50th name depending on the size of the average daily population). In very small jails, this systematic sampling is generally not required. One alternative is to select all inmates who have been in jail longer than the cut-off time period. New names can be added each day until the required sample size is reached. It is important to reject any inmate who has previously been selected and assessed with the new classification forms for the pilot study as duplication may reduce the validity of the findings.

Collecting the Data

Collecting classification data on any substantial sample size is a fairly large undertaking and requires substantial time and effort.

It is important to bring top management into the picture to obtain the necessary commitment of staff time. Depending on the condition of jail records
and the availability of computerized data screens, the task of filling out new classification forms for the pilot study may vary from 10 to 30 minutes per inmate. Overtime may be required if staff are burdened with a heavy load of routine work.

The transition manager should supervise this process and develop a plan to identify the correct sample, conduct the new classification assessments, and collect any additional needed data. **Data collection must be conducted systematically and not allowed to drag on interminably. Classification staff who are conducting the assessments must have a daily target (e.g., three extra assessments per day) and their progress must be reviewed by the manager.**

The supervising manager must check the accuracy and legibility of completed forms. This data collection is the foundation for the whole pilot study and quality control of the information is critical. Sloppily collected data, incomplete forms, and data errors can undermine the study and produce inaccurate results.

**Data Preparation**

Data coding procedures must be appropriate so that statistical analysis will be valid.

If the data are not computerized and are collected manually on paper forms, then it is important to develop a coding frame for each piece of information on the forms. A coding frame is needed to convert all answers into numerical codes that are then entered into the computer database. Figure 11 provides an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender:</th>
<th>Female = 2</th>
<th>Male = 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offense Category:</td>
<td>Felony = 2</td>
<td>Misdemeanor = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity:</td>
<td>African-American = 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mexican-American = 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian = 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anglo = 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 11. Sample Coding Frame for Data Collection

Simple conversion codes such as those shown in the figure above are needed so that all classification data and question responses can be scored for entry into the computer and subsequent analysis. The person conducting the statistical analysis should design this coding frame and give it to those responsible for data entry. Data can then be directly entered into a personal computer database or spreadsheet (e.g., Excel) and then transferred to virtually any statistical program (SPSS, SAS, etc.).

**Data Analysis: The Critical Questions**

Once the data are transferred into a statistical package, several kinds of analysis are needed to assess different aspects of the nature and validity of the new classification system. A potentially huge number of statistical analyses are possible (Clear, 1988; Teplin & Swartz, 1989) to examine various aspects of validity. This chapter does not review all of the possibilities but only addresses some of the basic analyses. Note that the statistical tables detailed below do not refer to any particular jail but were selected to illustrate the kind of statistical tables and charts that may be used for a pilot test.

**Establish Percentages at Each Custody Level**

Because of potential impact to the housing plan, the first task may be to examine how the new classification system will divide inmates into the major custody levels and any sublevels used by the system. In Figure 12, the bar chart depicts a simple way to display the findings. The vertical axis indicates the percentage of offenders in low (1), medium (2) and high (3) custody levels.
Figure 12. Custody Level Bar Chart

Compare Former and Proposed System Custody Allocations

One important type of analysis is to compare how inmates are classified by the new method versus the old (current) method. This comparison uses a contingency (cross tabulation) analysis as shown below in Figure 13. This table cross-tabulates the current classification (low, medium, and high shown down left side of the table) against the new classification (low, medium, and high shown along the top of the table). This type of cross-tabulation clearly shows how all of the offenders are classified by both systems and also where the two classifications agree and disagree with each other. The table illustrates that the old system tended to place large numbers of detainees into medium (447) whereas the new system, with only 222 in medium, clearly has redistributed many offenders into minimum and maximum so that there is a much more even distribution of offenders across the three custody levels. Agreements between the two classifications are shown by the cells that may be called the main diagonal of the table [i.e., the low-low (29), med-med (160) and high-high (20) cells]. The off-diagonal cells indicate disagreements between the two systems in
classifying inmates. The marginal totals (or percentages) in the table provide the numbers of inmates classified as maximum, medium, and minimum by each system e.g. 82, 447, and 71 for the old system; and, 232, 222, and 146 for the new classification.

New Custody Levels | Total  
|-------------------|--------
| Low   | Medium | High |        |
| Old   |        |      |        |
| Low   | 29     | 35   | 18     | 82    |
| Medium| 179    | 160  | 108    | 447   |
| High  | 24     | 27   | 20     | 71    |
| Total | 232    | 222  | 146    | 600   |

Figure 13. Comparing Old/New System Custody Level Assignments

It is important to review these types of data carefully before introducing the new classification into routine operations. In the example, there are substantial disagreements (as shown by the relatively small numbers in the main diagonal cells), which result in a substantial shift of inmates away from medium (in the old system) to low and high custody levels in the new system. This type of shift will clearly force an adjustment to the jail’s housing plan to prevent overcrowding in minimum and maximum levels.

Test the Validity of the New Method

Many small jails do not collect the types of data required for validation testing in a consistent and easily accessible manner, which makes it difficult or impossible to conduct this type of extensive validation testing. However, this kind of analysis is required for a full examination of the strengths and weaknesses of a new or unvalidated classification system. Because such studies require special statistical skills, validation reports are often prepared by a professional organization. Small jails may enlist the services of a professional organization or a university researcher who has skills in statistics. Analyses provided by these organizations test the significance of two kinds of associations:
1. Are the custody levels significantly different on critical external behaviors (e.g. disciplinary levels, violent infractions)?

2. Are the risk factors that are used to construct the classification (e.g., seriousness of prior offences) significantly associated with the custody levels and also with the same external variables?

Both of these questions are answered by assessing the strength of these associations and then testing whether they are strong enough to claim statistical significance. If the associations are significant, we can conclude that the new classification shows demonstrated evidence of concurrent validity. This kind of validity means that the classification levels (low, medium, and high) have significant associations with external factors such as disciplinary infractions, violence levels, or grievance levels.

Virtually all kinds of validation testing require the specification of external validation variables (i.e., variables such as violent infraction levels that were not used in constructing the new classification system). Validation testing assesses whether the new classification is capable of separating inmates according to their potential for risk as reflected by these kinds of behaviors. **A classification method is valid if inmates who pose the greatest risk are classified to the higher custody levels and the lower risk inmates to minimum custody.**

The most common examples of risks that are used for external validation variables in jails include institutional infractions, probation or parole failure, new arrests when released, and so on. Statisticians usually refer to these kinds of statistical tests as tests of bivariate associations; and the technical tests that are used to assess significance are the F-ratio test, the chi-square test, or the strength of the correlation coefficient. Understand that these tests are used to assess the strength of association between the classification and each external variable.

Certainly one of the most important types of risk in jails of any size is inmate misconduct. Jail staff commonly record this by means of an inmate
disciplinary report, which, if they are reliably maintained, may provide a rich data source for validation testing. If these are not available, it may not be possible to conduct a validation test.

Supplemental data may be needed to support a full-blown validation test. Each inmate's entire disciplinary record will have to be collected, including the dates on which each infraction occurred. Thus, in addition to the new classification forms, a special “supplemental data coding sheet” will have to be created to collect any external validation data elements that are chosen for the validation testing. The form should provide the following data for each incident:

11. Date of incident,
12. Type of incident, and
13. Disposition of each incident.

This forms a full disciplinary history of the inmate so that the total number of infractions, their seriousness or violence, and their dates are known. It is important to separate the infraction record of the inmate for the time period that follows classification. This is sometimes known as the “time at risk.” In most cases an infractions rate is collected by dividing the total number of infractions that occurred during the time at risk by the total number of days at risk:

\[
\text{Infractions Rate} = \frac{\text{Total Number of Infractions}}{\text{Time at Risk (in days)}}
\]

This rate can then be used as the basis for comparing inmates and custody classes and also as the outcome variable in any more complex predictive or validation studies. Any significant correlation (or association) between the new classification system and such independent external variables (e.g., disciplinary infractions rate) provides evidence of predictive validity of the new system.
A simple approach is to compare the actual infraction rates for inmates who fall into the three basic custody levels as shown in Figure 14, which shows that the infraction percentages increase from 3% to 7% to 18% for the successively higher custody levels.

![Infraction Rates by Custody Level](image)

Figure 14. Infraction Rates by Custody Level

Significance tests can then be applied to such differences to provide formal tests of the level of significance. These are available in virtually any statistical package (e.g., SPSS, SAS). Figure 15 shows how these kinds of results are typically displayed. The figure illustrates three levels of custody classification compared on selected external independent variables to assess whether the levels are statistically different.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F-Ratio</th>
<th>Sig. Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Crime Involvement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>6706.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3353.419</td>
<td>306.950</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>6423.7</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>10.925</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13130.4</td>
<td>590</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supervision Rebellion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.135</td>
<td>5.513</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>644.362</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>1.113</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>656.633</td>
<td>581</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Classification (B)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>236.439</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>118.219</td>
<td>5.504</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>4596.520</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>21.479</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4832.959</td>
<td>216</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recidivism Rates</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>146.335</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>73.167</td>
<td>81.837</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>525.706</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>.894</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>672.041</td>
<td>590</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15. ANOVA of Custody Levels on Several External Variables

Although the above table may appear complicated, it is easily understood by focusing on the critical numbers that indicate how significantly the three custody levels differ on the external variables. The two key numbers are the F-ratio, which indicates the level of separation or difference between the custody classes (i.e., a large number means very high difference, but the F-ratio does not actually indicate whether the class differences are actually statistically significant) and the sig. level, which indicates the level of statistical significance. Specifically, any sig. level that is smaller than .05 is conventionally accepted as significantly different. In the above example, all four external variables are statistically significant, as all are smaller than .05. Consult with a statistician for more information on the meaning of statistical differences and these numbers.

The above analyses tested whether three external variables, total criminal involvement, rebellion against staff, and probation violation rates (recidivism), are statistically different between the custody levels. Additionally, it tested whether an
alternative custody classification (B Alternative) showed the same expected differences (i.e., that the two classifications are statistically related to each other) and again the answer was yes (F = 5.5; p = .005).

Establish the Relative Importance of Risk Factors

In a full-blown validation test, another important question is whether the classification decision is dominated by certain specific risk factors. This amounts to finding out the relative importance of each risk factor. In some point scales, seriousness of past offense or current arrest dominates the classification decision. This answer to this question is often derived by a technique called multiple regression. We will not go into the details of this process as it is only relevant to those jails that are building a brand new classification system from scratch and will involve complex statistical analyses that most small jails will not undertake.‡

Examining the Frequency and Types of Overrides

By cross-classifying the number of overrides used against the custody levels reached by the strict use of the new classification method, it is possible to identify the extent of overrides (percentages) for each custody level and for the total number of classifications done by officers. The direction of overrides (e.g.,

‡ Special Technical Note: This note is for statisticians enlisted to assist a jail with validation studies. The following general analysis may apply if the goal is to clarify the relative classificatory power of each risk factor (X) in regard to the overall point score total (Y). Set up a multiple regression model using the Xs as predictors (independent variables) and Y as the outcome (dependent variable) to address the question. The regression coefficients, usually standardized beta coefficients, although in some cases raw coefficients may be used, should provide a reasonable approximation of the relative importance of each risk factor. This task also may be partially accomplished by computing the zero order correlation coefficient between each individual risk factor (X) and the overall security points scale total (Y). In decision trees, this assessment is accomplished by a similar regression analysis or by simply cross-classifying the final classification levels of the tree against each risk factor. The magnitude of the association coefficients (Chi-square, Cramer's V, etc.) will indicate the relative contribution without relying on the significance tests. We acknowledge that there may be other statistical procedures to address this issue. This procedure clearly is totally separate from that of establishing the predictive validation of risk factors (X) against some external and independent criterion (Y, e.g., behavioral infractions following classification). This latter kind of analysis requires that the Y is absolutely independent from the Xs and will usually consist of disciplinary or other behaviors collected over
upward from minimum or medium or downward from maximum and medium) is clarified by this cross-classification analysis. This can be examined by a simple count of the overrides between each custody level. **Typically, override rates should not exceed 10–15% of all classifications.**

**Establish Reliability Across Staff**

Another test that is often used in a pilot study is an assessment of the reliability of the new classification method. This is often called a test of inter-rater reliability. This examines whether staff can use the new classification forms in a consistent manner. This is done by separately testing a small subsample (say 20 detainees) of offenders using at least two officers. For example, two officers may each (separately) classify the same 20 inmates using the new classification forms. **If the classification instruments are well designed, staff should score the forms and classify the inmates in a similar manner.** An agreement score is easily obtained by counting the number of times that the two raters agree on the classification level of these inmates. This should typically be greater than 80%.

\[
\text{\% Agreement} = \frac{\text{Number of Agreements between the Officers}}{\text{Total Number of Classifications}}
\]
Conclusion: The Need For Full-blown Validation Testing in Smaller Jails

Generally, it appears that most small jails do not conduct a full-blown validation test, especially if they select one of the two standard OJC methods. Many reasons contribute to this: lack of statistically skilled staff, lack of accurate disciplinary data, insufficient sample size for a validation test, and so on.

The most common reason for not conducting a full-blown validation test is that most small jails will select one of the two standard OJC methods (additive points or decision tree; see Chapter 4). Thus, the need to conduct additional validation study is mitigated to a large degree by the fact that substantial evidence of the soundness and quality of both of these methods have already been established in various jurisdictions and jails around the country. Ideally, we agree that validation studies should always be conducted, but with repeated evidence from multiple reports of the quality and reliability of these two classification systems becoming apparent (Austin, 1998), a small jail may reasonably choose to rely on these findings and omit a full-blown validation.
CHAPTER 9

STRATEGIES FOR INITIATING AND IMPLEMENTING CHANGE

This chapter provides a roadmap for successful implementation of an effective classification system. To that end, we summarize many of the lessons learned from hundreds of jails that have participated in the NIC workshops on objective classification over the last decade. Many excellent examples of successful implementation, including in many small jails, have occurred. Certain critical steps and strategies can greatly enhance the likelihood of success when undertaking such a transition. Brennan (1999) provides a published review of these lessons.

The implementation process is not as easy as simply obtaining new classification forms, distributing them to staff, and instructing them to start classifying inmates using the new forms. It is essential to obtain the buy-in of key jail staff, provide training, provide sufficient staff resources, and ensure that the new system is well suited to the particular needs, culture, and resources of the jail.

This chapter borrows heavily from the literature on project planning, introducing new information technology into jails, and the management of change in correctional organizations. We have adapted this general literature to the specific needs of the small jail. The following discussion provides details of planning, managing, and implementing effective classification for the small jail.

Critical Tasks in Successful Implementation

Before delving into the details of each specific task in the implementation process, consider the following “bird’s-eye view” of the various tasks and challenges that are typically required when introducing almost any new technology into a jail:
• Understand exactly why a change is needed. This starts with a clear understanding of the deficiencies of the old classification system.

• Develop a strong statement or "vision" of goals and benefits being sought from a new objective classification.

• Mobilize a coalition of stakeholders. Identify at the very earliest stages staff who will be impacted by the new system and gain their understanding and acceptance of the need for change.

• Overcome apathy and resistance. It is important to develop the information, rationale, and skills to overcome this resistance and co-opt these staff onto the project.

• Create a process for introducing the new classification system into the jail’s standard operating procedures.

• Maintain energy, focus, and direction over a period of several months so that the new project is not derailed by a lapse into “business as usual.”

• Build the required level of competence among staff so that the new classification system is used correctly.

• Secure sufficient staffing and other resources so that the classification system can function effectively.

Political planning and organizational skills are important in addressing these issues. Resistance to change may occur equally in small and large jails. A new classification system may typically include new forms, new software, new classification policies and procedures, and often a change to the way in which the jail houses and processes inmates. It is important to have a thorough understanding of strategies and tactics needed to build support and to initiate and plan these kinds of changes.

The following are the major steps and strategies needed to implement new classification procedures and policies.
Task 1: Justify the Need for a New Classification to Key Stakeholders

At the earliest stage, it is essential to provide a strong justification for adopting a new classification system. The rationale for the change must be readily understood and available when complacency or resistance occur. Be prepared to justify, explain, and defend the project during the earliest stages. The staff as a whole and top management in particular must understand the rationale for the change or "business as usual" will prevail. The reasoning behind the change must be communicated. This is typically a responsibility of those who assume leadership of the implementation project. The basic goal is to motivate the staff and obtain their understanding and buy-in. Several component aspects are necessary, as described below.

Articulate Deficiencies of the Existing System

A first task is to communicate the problems and deficiencies of the current classification policy or procedure. The many deficiencies of a traditional, informal, subjective approach have been clearly articulated in legal actions against jails, including

- Inconsistent decision-making,
- Excessive subjectivity,
- Vulnerability to staff bias and prejudice,
- High danger of false positive classification errors (i.e., over classification), and
- High vulnerability to litigation and legal action.

These ideas are often best communicated in a memo that can be developed by jail leadership and clarified by the planning committee for the new classification at the earliest stages of the project. Additionally, any review of case law pertaining to jail classification will usually list the reasons above as justification for adopting more effective objective classification methods. Most of these issues
are also published in Brennan (1987) and in most of the NIC workbooks that have been developed for the Objective Classification Workshops.

**Communicate Benefits and Goals of the New System**

The leadership of the project must be able to communicate the expected benefits and goals of the new classification system. This must be at the fingertips of the planning committee members. This is needed to motivate staff to cooperate in implementing change. This vision statement provides a sense of direction and motivation. All major stakeholders should agree on the intended goals and benefits of a new system. Any inability to articulate this vision may cripple the attempt to obtain the buy-in from other jail staff. Some of the main benefits include

- Staff and inmate safety,
- Consistent decision-making,
- Reduced classification errors, and
- Reduced vulnerability to litigation over classification.

These benefits and goals must be communicated both to line staff and management. **It is important that the top administrator or jail manager understands the importance of project, makes it a priority, and provides support and sign-off for the new classification policies and procedures.** Senior leadership support is also needed to accept the new classification as formal policy of the jail, provide needed resources (software, staff, or financial), and motivate staff to collaborate on the project. Conversely, weak support from top management may cripple implementation. (See Chapter 2 for a description of the benefits of objective classification.)

**Task 2: Build a Coalition**

Successful implementation of almost any project cannot occur without a base of political support. Before introducing any new classification, a critical task
is to build a base of support. This involves political as well as organizational skills as described in the following subtasks.

**Identify Key Stakeholders**

A new classification system will affect many staff at a jail, including security staff, classification staff, MIS staff, senior managers, and so on. It is important to identify who they are and provide them with full information about the project and its benefits. It is important for planning and implementation team leaders to be aware of staff needs and expectations and to present the case that the new system benefits all of them.

**Obtain Commitment**

Unified commitment among organizational leadership and all major stakeholders is the ideal foundation for successful implementation. Obtaining the support of key people who have influence and authority is a priority, and it can sometimes be difficult to achieve. Coalition-building partially depends on specifying appropriate and compelling goals that meet the needs of the various stakeholders.

Ideally such support should be lined up before the project progresses too far. Generally, major stakeholders prefer to be involved in early agenda-setting and design decisions. Building support and commitment will involve a range of political tasks, such as selling the project, gaining staff participation and ownership, and establishing a working committee of stakeholders.

**Communication, trust, shared vision, and an appreciation of the benefits of the new classification are the building blocks of "buy-in" and support. If these are overlooked, problems of resistance, sabotage, resource acquisition, and abandonment may emerge.**

Achieving such support can be approached in several ways. An offer of direct participation to these key stakeholders in planning and decision-making will help to strengthen their buy-in and commitment. Another tactic is to educate the
stakeholders by reminding them repeatedly of the benefits of the new classification and the deficiencies of the current procedures (as outlined above).

**Promote Shared Participation**

Forming a planning team will co-opt several stakeholders to participate in the project and simultaneously distribute the responsibilities for planning and implementation among committed participants. Teamwork skills are helpful in motivating the members, focusing their efforts on specific implementation tasks, and coordinating responses to their diverse concerns. Team effectiveness is strengthened by participatory and supportive management styles rather than an authoritarian chain-of-command style. We have noted that jail staff are usually willing to participate in innovative change if facility leadership provides support, encouragement, and participation in solving implementation problems.

**Task 3: Create a Planning and Decision-making Structure**

One consistent lesson from previous implementation efforts is that a single officer acting alone can rarely achieve success at changing policy or procedure. A small planning committee of carefully chosen stakeholders, even if it is only two or three people, has a much better chance of success. Small jails do not require the elaborate committees and planning structures that are usually needed in large jails. However, even in a small jail it is advisable to formalize the planning and decision-making processes so that key players can participate in a joint planning effort.

**Install a Planning Committee to Lead the Transition**

A small planning committee should handle the change and will strengthen the adaptive capacity of the jail. Normal staffing arrangements are seldom geared to the tasks of designing and implementing change. The structure of the committee should include the task leaders described below.

**Transition Manager (Change Agent).** The transition manager assumes leadership of the project and acts as the "change agent" by spearheading the
project. This person should be well respected by peers and should have technical, management, and political skills. We have found that successful change efforts benefit from the presence of a strong transitional leader. This manager's skills, personal resources, and enthusiasm are vital. The energy and enthusiasm of the "change maker" are often contagious, so that other staff members become fired up about the new system.

**Steering Committee.** This is a committee of senior administrators who will sponsor the project and sign off on final policies and procedures, but who do not generally conduct the detailed planning of the project. This kind of committee is often needed in large jails for political purposes but generally is not needed in small jails, where the politics may not be so convoluted. If the jail accommodates between 100 and 200 inmates per day (ADP) and is on the borderline between small- and medium-sized jails, consider forming this type of committee, mainly for political reasons.

**Implementation Team.** This is the basic working group for the project and usually consists of 2 to 6 stakeholders who become engaged in all planning, decision-making, and logistics (e.g., training in the new procedures, classification design troubleshooting, coordinating and maintaining the momentum of the process). It is usually wise to seek broad involvement of users, stakeholders, managers, technical staff, and so on. Exclusion of any key stakeholders (e.g., security staff, treatment staff) may create havoc. Strategically positioned staff should be included as needed.

**External Consultants.** There is sometimes a need for external expert assistance such as computer programming or statistical expertise for a jail that is developing and validating its own classification system. For jails adopting one of the standard OJC methods described in Chapter 4, external consultants may not be needed. If the jail is adopting an automated classification from an external vendor, note that these firms often provide software training and some additional instruction to staff on various computer operations.
Develop an Implementation Activity Plan

This plan specifies who does what and when. It should be discussed in meetings with the Transition Team and broad stakeholder group. Certain important stages and milestones in the introduction of the new classification should be discussed in detail and noted on a timeline that indicates responsibilities and due dates. These may include

- Developing a written vision statement of goals and benefits of the new classification (and performance requirements),
- Final selection of a classification instrument,
- Staff training in the new classification instrument,
- Pilot study to assess “workability” and expected impact,
- Selecting a go-live date for the new classification procedures,
- Updating the housing plan to ensure consistency with the new classification,
- Updating policy and procedure manuals for classification, and
- Updating quality control and supervision procedures.

It is important that this planning document be maintained in writing so that all staff are aware of the overall stages and progress of the project. Updates should be posted regularly to inform staff of changes, upcoming issues, and so on.

Develop a Mechanism for Monitoring Progress

A simple planning chart or Gannt Chart that shows the various tasks, timeframes, and milestones should be maintained so that all stakeholders can monitor progress in implementing the new classification system. The activity plan discussed above will be the backbone of this chart. All parties—especially top administrators—must be apprised of progress, difficulties, successes, and failures. The top administrator must also be made aware of the dates for signing
off on new policies, the dates when new policies will be available in written form for review, and the dates for introducing the new classification into routine processing of detainees.

**Task 4: Choose a Classification Method/Procedure**

One of the most important early decisions is to choose a classification method that best fits the needs of the jail. Chapter 4 describes the two standard methods that are widely used in U.S. jails. Both methods work well for small jails. They are both simple, efficient, and easily learned. Both have been carefully pilot tested and implemented in many small and large jails.

**Use Caution if Borrowing a Method from Another Jail**

Some jails borrow or adapt a classification prototype from another jail. In this case, it is important to determine whether the system has been validated and whether it conforms to the principles of good practice (as described in Chapter 2). This warning also applies to any classification method that is part of a software package from any computer vendor. Be sure to determine whether there is a validation report: if not, consider carefully the costly outcomes of employing an unvalidated method or the expense and expertise required to do the research to examine the system’s validity. This requires statistical analysis skills that are generally beyond the scope of work that can be done in small jails, unless support can be obtained from a local university or consultant.

**Assess and Select a Method**

Performance requirements should guide the selection of a classification method. Stakeholders may have different ideas about performance requirements of a new classification system. Some will emphasize speed and efficiency and others may emphasize face validity, ease of understanding, or other diverse criteria. Negotiations with the coalition of stakeholders will clarify a wish list of optimal performance requirements. Several evaluative and design criteria have
been specified in various NIC and ACA publications and are discussed in Chapters 2 and 4.

Selecting one of the standard methods offers several advantages. The two standard methods described here are additive point scale and decision tree. Both are widely used, efficient, and require only a few minutes to classify a new detainee. They do, however, require a face-to-face interview with the inmate to verify the basic classification data and to determine whether any aggravating or mitigating factors may warrant an upward or downward override. The face-to-face interview is an important component of classification and should not be avoided.

In some cases a small jail may be unable to decide between the additive point system and the decision tree. In this case it is often useful to try out both methods and then compare them in a pilot study. Staff who participate in the pilot study will usually develop a preference for one or other of the two methods and their preference as well as their expressed rationale for the preference should be considered in the final choice.

Task 5: Develop a Training Plan to Build Staff Competence

A training plan should be designed to build the skills and competence of staff who will use the new procedures. This must be done before going live with the new system and also before pilot testing. New classification methods commonly require new skills. Staff must be willing to learn such skills and administrative staff must be willing to provide training opportunities.

Use Available Training Resources

A training curriculum must be developed to explain the role of classification, its technical procedures, strengths and weaknesses, legal requirements, professional association standards, and provide practice using real-life examples. Much of the material in this manual may be used as part of the training curriculum. Chapter 4 in particular provides virtually all the
information on methods and how to score them as well as several exercises in the use of the selected classification methods. Inadequate training and failure to build competence in the new procedures may be a critical challenge for small jails. A poor understanding of classification, for example, can lead to fatal design flaws being introduced into the new system by unwary administrators (e.g., invalid risk factors, excessive weighting of certain factors, erroneous cutting points). This is a particular danger when using a nonstandard method that is embedded in a computer vendor’s jail software package or when borrowing an unvalidated method from another jail. Other possible sources of training include the American Jail Association and American Correctional Association, which provide regular training programs in objective jail classification. Additionally, NIC typically provides at least one classification seminar per year.

Provide for Supervision

Staff competence also is dependent on review and input from a knowledgeable supervisor. If the jail does not have a formal supervisor, it is important that at least one classification officer reach a high level of skill and can function as an informal supervisor when other officers experience difficulties or confusion. It is advisable to develop some supervisory procedures for all officers who participate in the classification process on a part-time basis. Make good use of those officers who have developed expertise in classification or who have attended formal training programs. This will help to promote learning, competence, and comfort with the new system, particularly in small jails where several officers may do classification only occasionally or on a part-time basis.

Task 6: Build Staff, Office Space, and Software Resources

A major challenge for the planning committee is to obtain sufficient staffing and other logistical resources to make classification possible. This must be accomplished before going live with the new classification system. Classification in many jails is starved of resources, and classification often is seen as competing with more important functions such as security. This may undermine
efforts to implement the new system. Sufficient resources must be identified and budgeted so that a new classification procedure will have a reasonable chance of success. **Insufficient staffing, office space, or other resources often result in streamlining or stripping down of the classification procedure and can damage the integrity of the classification procedures.** This can weaken critical functions such as data verification and can reduce inmate interviews to a few cursory and minimally informative questions. A progressive loss of data quality can result in reduced reliability and validity of classification decisions. Errors and the resultant inefficiencies and costs will then multiply.

**Perform a Cost/Benefit Analysis**

To justify the needed resources such as staff time, storage space, and computers needed for classification, it is important to be aware of the many costs of incorrect classification. Chapter 2 presents in detail many of the benefits of a good classification system, which can produce enormous cost savings and efficiencies for the jail. The chaos, violence, and legal vulnerabilities that can result from poor classification should be sufficient to motivate senior administrators to assign sufficient resources to the classification functions.

**Identify the Minimum Resources Required**

Classification may have to be reprioritized to obtain the leverage needed to command appropriate allocation of scarce resources. Senior administrators (who control the allocation of resources) may have to be educated on the issues raised in Chapter 2. Inadequate understanding of the roles and benefits of classification among administrators often results in inadequate resources being allocated to classification. Resources may have to be redistributed from other units or departments, which may create a competitive situation and engender resistance and political conflict. The cost-benefit issues mentioned above may have to be invoked to assure allocation of sufficient resources for classification. It is important to emphasize the contribution that classification makes to jail
security. Administrators who control resources must be aware that good information and correct classifications may in fact do more to promote more efficiency, safety, security, and order than additional security guards or other measures.

The planning committee should review the following resource issues:

**Staff.** In small jails several officers may have to incorporate classification tasks into their jobs. Procedures will have to be developed to govern how available staff can cope with classification tasks. In general, only jails exceeding approximately 120 ADP start to have classification officers assigned on a full-time, dedicated basis. It is important to designate which staff will deal with various classification issues as they arise.

**Interviewing space.** Ideally, new detainees should be interviewed in a location that provides for a quiet, private, and confidential interview. A separate office is ideal. Small jails with limited space may have to compromise on this ideal, so careful consideration should be given to this resource. Architecture and cell structure may drive the allocation of space for interviewing.

**Software.** Ideally all classification records should be entered into a computer database, which provides more efficient data entry and retrieval. Classification processes are usually more efficient when historical data is quickly retrievable from a database. Inexpensive MIS software (including classification) is available for small jails (see Chapter 5). Such systems should be priced, evaluated for ease of use, technical support, validity/reliability, cost, and compatibility with existing systems and hardware before making any selections.

**Training resources.** Officers who conduct classification will need training in the new procedures. One or two days of training should suffice to bring a new officer up to speed with the simple classification tools discussed in this report (Chapter 4). Training resources include competent and experienced staff to conduct the training, space in which to conduct it, materials to aid in comprehension and recollection, and review and retraining as needed.
Task 7: Conduct a Pilot Test

It is prudent to test any new procedure before introducing it into routine operations. An important task of the planning committee is to conduct a pilot test of the new classification methods (see Chapter 8 for more detail on pilot testing).

Identify Pilot Test Objectives

Any design flaws (i.e., problems in either the method itself or in collecting the needed data) in the classification method must be identified and corrected before implementing a new procedure. The pilot test will also reveal much about the basic practicality of the new method. Some of the questions that can be answered by a well-designed pilot test include

- Can the data be collected easily?
- Do staff understand the method?
- Do staff prefer the decision tree method or the point system approach?
- How long does it take staff to conduct a classification?
- How often do staff disagree with the formal classification and invoke an override?
- Do staff have the skills to conduct an interview?
- What will be the impact on housing patterns?

The pilot test can help to establish the percentage of offenders who will be classified into each of the basic custody classes. If these percentages are dramatically different from the old percentages allocated to maximum, medium, and minimum, then adjustments may be required to the housing plan to accommodate the new patterns. This is discussed in more detail in the Chapter 8.
Determine Whether the Pilot Test Should Include Validation

Most small jails will not have to conduct a statistical validation test, which makes the pilot test a much simpler proposition. However, if the committee has selected a nonstandard classification procedure or borrowed an unvalidated method from another jail, then a more rigorous pilot study with an examination of statistical validity is necessary. A pilot test may vary in completeness and sophistication (Alexander & Austin, 1993; Brennan, 1993). It is beyond the scope of this document to present the complex details of a full statistical validation test. However, the above references provide specific descriptions of the statistical methods that are generally used in validating offender classifications.

Refine as Necessary

Results of the pilot test may suggest refinements or modifications so create the best fit between the new classification system and the jail’s policies and resources. In general, most of these refinements will focus on arrangements for storage and retrieval of classification data. Data storage procedures in many jails are quite archaic. Data stored in paper folders or inmate jackets represent a serious deficiency in terms of efficient retrieval. A major refinement that many jails introduce simultaneously with a new objective classification system is computerization of data storage and retrieval. This is not absolutely necessary as it is quite easy to use either additive points or decision tree approaches in manual form. However, computerized databases definitely speed up the retrieval of the needed classification data.

There may be many different types of refinements and modifications aside from data retrieval processes. For example, interview arrangements, housing plans, levels of privileges and sanctioning policies, management reports, training procedures, policies for monitoring/reviewing overrides, and so on may all be reviewed by the planning committee as a result of the findings of the pilot study. The planning committee should be open to feedback from the staff who conduct the pilot study and identify any glitches and should do their best to transform any
serious problems into procedural revisions to align the new classification policies with the jail’s resources and staffing levels.

**Task 8: Implement the New Procedures**

The next milestone in the implementation process is to choose a date when the new classification procedures will be introduced into routine practice. Completing steps 1 through 7 above should help to assure a smooth transition to the new system.

**Plan a Conversion Strategy**

It may be prudent to maintain a backup until the new system is thoroughly mastered. In some cases the existing classification procedures are routinely continued while a new system is being phased in. Extreme care must be focused on reliability and validity of classification decisions. Additionally, there should be minimal disruption of normal jail activities during the changeover. **Extra supervision may be needed during this time to help the classification staff build confidence and skills in the new classification method.**

**Adjust the Housing Plan**

As the new system begins to populate the jail with newly classified detainees, the housing plan or designations (minimum, medium, and maximum custody cells) may require adjustment. Even with the data from the pilot study in hand, additional “tweaking” of the housing plan may be required to maintain a good fit with the new percentages of inmates who are classified into the three basic custody levels. Because of the severe limitations of housing space in small jails, the approach to adjusting the housing plan may have to be very flexible so that certain cells are used for different custody levels at different times depending on who is in the jail and crowding levels at a particular time. Chapter 7 on housing plans provides many ideas on how best to maintain a good adjustment.
Post Implementation Tasks

At the post implementation stage, the planning committee must address additional key tasks such as quality assurance, staff competence, and ensuring that the new classification system becomes formally “wired into” the policies and procedures of the jail. These additional tasks assure both quality control and proper institutionalization of the new classification procedures.

Develop a Policy and Procedures Manual

The committee should finalize the new classification policies and procedures in writing. The most senior staff should sign-off on these procedures. A well-written and updated policy and procedure manual is needed to coordinate participants, to function as a training document, and to clarify the tasks and responsibilities associated with classification (see Chapter 6). When policies and procedures are vague, line staff may impose their own interpretations, which will produce inconsistent classification decisions.

Establish Clear Lines of Authority

For both routine classification work and successful implementation planning and coordination, there must be clear lines of authority. There are many points in the implementation process at which procedural, definitional, and discretionary conflicts may arise, with a high potential for misunderstanding and miscommunication. Clear lines of authority are needed to coordinate stakeholders and maintain an orderly implementation process, in addition to resolving any classification conflicts in the day-to-day work of classification decision-making. Such authority designations (e.g., authority for final housing decisions, resolution of disagreements) are often politically difficult and must be achieved by the planning committee and through careful negotiations with the various stakeholders. Such agreements can then be formally added to the policy and procedures manual to institutionalize them.
Monitor the Impact of the New Classification

Although many jails ignore the issue of whether or not the new classification has had a positive impact on the jail, we suggest that this should be a high priority even in a small jail. Ongoing monitoring usually requires data and therefore a good MIS/database system. The monitoring task may be too onerous for a small jail if it is not fully computerized. The monitoring process should address questions such as

- Did the new classification system reach its goals?
- Is the jail safer?
- Is it more orderly?

The jail database will usually contain the data elements that can be graphed to indicate whether the jail is safer, more orderly, more secure, and so on. These data elements provide various indicators of outcomes (e.g., numbers of rule violations) to indicate the degree of attainment of goals. Data elements such as inmate grievances, inmate fights and injuries, reclassifications, contraband levels, and so on, can be used creatively to monitor several key goals. Routine monitoring reports should be distributed to key staff. We have noted that in many small jails, the development of such outcome measures is often incomplete or inadequate. Yet, as more jails are fully computerized such monitoring and the automated production of useful reports becomes quite feasible.

Review Supervision Procedures

The supervision task assesses whether the new classification methods are being used properly. A key aspect of quality assurance requires supervisory methods to assess the integrity with which the new procedures are used by staff. Areas to consider, for example, are whether staff are cutting corners, making errors, exhibiting resistance and sabotage or compliance, and assessing their views on the user-friendliness of the system. Managers must demand a high level of staff integrity in the use of the new procedures. Any attempt by staff to
subvert, replace, or undermine the new classification system must be identified and resolved by leadership. The reasons for such behaviors should be discovered and appropriate actions taken to resolve the issue.

**Special Challenges to Implementation in a Small Jail Context**

We have noted that there are special challenges in the small jail to the successful implementation of effective classification systems. The following sections provide some insight into these special problems and circumstances and may provide the planning committee with some insights that will help to forestall difficulties.

**The Need for a Change Champion**

We have repeatedly noted that successful implementation of a new classification system usually requires at least one person on the implementation team, ideally in a leadership position, who is "on fire" about the project. Such a change champion can identify problems, see opportunities for innovation, and apply sufficient energy to perform their main job while exploring ways to introduce improved classification policies and procedures. This person's leadership energy is often critical in the kind of "culture-busting" challenge that often exists in jails. This kind of manager has been described as a "monomaniac with a mission." Such leaders are not always found in correctional agencies or in small jails. When absent, careful arrangements must be made to build a powerful implementation team or coalition to provide this leadership.

**The Need for Adequate Resources**

Another critical challenge for the planning committee may be the need to acquire certain resources. A common challenge in many small jails is the absence of sufficient staff or space to support classification procedures. Sufficient staff, housing space, and appropriate staff competencies are all critical. Given determination and creativity, we believe that most small jails may still overcome these deficiencies. Yet, we acknowledge that the concept of organizational readiness includes the availability of needed resources. In the
case of objective classification, this focuses on building or acquiring appropriate staffing, computer availability, effective MIS software and database, office space for interviewing, training resources, and appropriate classification software.

**The Need for Management Skills**

Any jail's capacity for change and innovation clearly depends on the presence of leaders with good planning and political skills and the vision that is based on a good understanding of the benefits and roles of classification. Additional helpful skills include agenda setting, persuasiveness or influencing skills, strategy development, networking, and negotiation skills. Success in implementing the new technology is more easily achieved if the jail has reasonably sophisticated managers. Such managers may more readily appreciate the potential and uses of the new technology and its fit with their jail. Good planning of the implementation process basically rests on good managers. In many jails there is a marked absence of effective managers or of staff with technical and leadership skills. In such jails it may be difficult to find any manager with the skills or motivation to champion the new system.

The implementation of objective classification systems additionally requires a strong knowledge of internal politics, resource acquisition, interagency referral patterns, and policy coordination. The skills needed to achieve these agreements are different from the simple top-down, chain-of-command orders. Political and social skills to effect these changes and forge new relationships are the basis of coalition building. Consensus and commitment by staff at various levels are prerequisites for effective change. Inability to obtain consensus among critical stakeholders may cripple the implementation of a new classification because certain well-placed staff or managers may be able to sabotage any innovation.

**The Need for a Jail Culture with Capacity for Change**

Each jail has its own culture, part of which is capacity for change. Attempts to introduce a major change such as a new classification method

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without assessing or bolstering a jail's capacity to implement the new procedures may be futile. Many jails are characterized by inertia, rigidity, resistance, and limited capacity for change. Staff openness to change is critical to success but the “culture” of many jails is hostile to change. In such cases, the burden of proof always falls on the one proposing the change. Any new approach is seen as an attack on the status quo and the staff power system. It has often been noted that hierarchical chain-of-command jails are often very resistant to change. Thus, an insightful awareness of the jail’s cultural climate should guide the strategies for implementing change and should be considered in all phases of implementation.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed many critical tasks needed for successful implementation of a new classification system in a small jail. This process begins with identifying and justifying the need for a new system, identifying key stakeholders, building a coalition for change, and developing a plan for the process of change. The selection of a classification system, identification of resources to support the system, pilot testing, and implementation itself follow in an orderly sequence. The early planning stages should be followed by post implementation activities, including formalization of procedures and policies, establishment of clear lines of authority, assessment of the new system, and adjustment of supervisory procedures. In small jails, special consideration should be devoted to motivational, management, and political skills that will enhance the capacity for and success of changes.
CHAPTER 10

THE BIG PICTURE: CLASSIFICATION AND ITS ROLE IN POPULATION MONITORING, CROWDING MANAGEMENT, POLICY, AND PLANNING

The traditional role of classification in jails has been to assess inmate risk, make housing decisions, and determine access to various programs and privileges. These tasks are primarily the responsibility of line classification officers. However, at a policy-making and administrative level, it has become increasingly clear that classification and its data can play an equally important role. This chapter focuses on the role of classification data at an administrative planning and policy level. The bulk of the chapter describes ways in which the classification database can be used to produce informative management reports that may be useful in monitoring, understanding, and justifying various policy and planning challenges (e.g., overcrowding and population management strategies) that are frequently encountered in jails.

The links between classification decisions and jail crowding are increasingly recognized and have important policy and resource implications. For example, classification strongly influences eligibility screening for programs such as pretrial release, day release, or early release. In addition to a high impact on jail crowding, these issues also require coordination with courts for offender monitoring, organizing work release, fast-tracking inmate processing, and so on. These all have strong impacts on the use of jail housing resources and the efficiency with which jail resources are used. Because housing decisions, privilege policies, program eligibility, and early release eligibility are all directly tied to inmate classification assignments, it is clear that the classification database is critical to understanding the flows of offenders that drive jail
populations and crowding management strategies through the use of intermediate sanctions.

**Using Data to Understand Jail Population Characteristics**

**Routine Monitoring Indices**

An obvious first use of classification-related data in understanding and monitoring jail population characteristics is to track the security profile trends of the jail by month or year. This identifies changes in the security profile of the jail over time, such as increases in the percentage of maximum (more dangerous) security inmates. Figure 16 is an example of tracking the percentage of maximum, medium, and minimum security inmates by year over an 8-year period. Note in this example that both the maximum and medium security populations are rising and the minimum security population is decreasing. The type of tracking may have multiple ramifications in terms of staffing needs and training, facility enlargements, public safety issues, budget, and so on.

![Inmate Classification Trends by Security Level by Year](image)

What are the classification profile trends of my jail?

Figure 16. Tracking Inmate Classification Trends
Other classification-driven data include monitoring the extent to which the jail must mis-house certain custody levels and is therefore out of compliance with its housing policy. This is reflected in running percentages of inmates who are mis-housed. The figure above shows increases in a jail’s percentages of maximum and medium security inmates. If this continues for a substantial period, administrators may need to examine whether the housing plan for these custody levels remains adequate to ensure separation of inmates by security level. As indicated in Figure 16, monitoring the number and types of inmate mis-housing by month or year, may provide administration with valuable information concerning rates and levels of mis-housed offenders and the degree of “spillover” from more overcrowded to less crowded areas. This indicates difficulties in compliance with formal housing policies due to rising populations in certain custody categories and also increasing liability concerns. This information may be used to adjust the housing plan over time and to document the need for additional beds by security type when planning a new facility or renovation. Figure 17 reveals an escalating lack of medium and maximum security beds.

What are the mis-housing trends, or lack of appropriate space, by classification level, of the facility?

![Percent of Inmates Mishoused by Security Level by Year](image)

Figure 17. Tracking Inmate Mis-housing Trends
It is also important to track trends in major disciplinary infractions such as inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-staff assaults. In parallel with increased crowding and mis-housing, one might predict an increase in assaults resulting from increases in the seriousness of the population and inmate mis-housing. Monitoring increases in violence may alert management to the need to modify housing plans, upgrade classification procedures, or adopt other strategies to reverse this trend and to ensure safety.

Many useful monitoring indices and charts (e.g., trends in the use of medical/mental health needs, utilization of programs and services) and innumerable outcomes may be derived from classification data (e.g., percentages of inmates who successfully complete various programs). The list below suggests other data elements or issues that may be useful for monitoring/reporting.

- **Medical and Suicide Risk Decisions**
  - Number and percentage of inmates with medical problems requiring special management
  - Total number and average of sick call visits for last 12 months
  - Sick call visits cross tabulated by inmates; average sick calls per month per inmate
  - Number and percentage of new admissions flagged as suicide risks at intake
  - Number and percentage of flagged suicide risks confirmed by Mental Health
  - Number and percentage of inmates testing positive for tuberculosis (TB) in past 12 months
  - Number and percentage of inmates receiving medical services with no medical insurance
  - Percentage of female inmates pregnant in last 12 months

- **Classification and Housing Decisions**
  - Classification custody level breakdown
  - Number and percentage of classification overrides
  - Number and percentage mis-housed by security type
  - Number and percentage identified as active gang member
  - Number and percentage of major and minor disciplinaries by type in last 12 months

- **Programs and Services**
  - Number and percentage assessed as needing substance abuse treatment
Policy-relevant Information from Classification Data

A good database is a first requirement in any attempt to understand how the jail is being utilized by the law enforcement and criminal justice community. Good data are also required for the development of any new policies that link classification to population management, crowding control, and forward planning. The classification process, especially when automated, will provide a rich source of inmate processing data. First, classification data can be used to assess many characteristics of the jail's inmate population. Inmate-specific data elements that are most useful for this include admission date, pre-/post sentence status, primary offense category, classification level and date classified, release reason, release date, and so on. Using these data, administrators can break down the jail's population to determine the size of the various subpopulations (e.g., by offense category, pre-/post sentence status) are passing through the jail, discern subpopulation trends, and identify which subpopulations may be targeted for innovative policy and program options.

The following examples provide data reports that comprehensively profile inmate characteristics and provide data-driven monitoring information for use in policy analysis.
Figure 18, for example, may provide a starting point by using a single data field (booking date) to report the number of bookings in the jail by month or year and reveals trends in inmate admissions.

Figure 18. Reporting Admission Trends

Figure 19 provides an examination of crowding trends by using the computed average daily population (ADP) field to provide a graph of ADP trends by year. Both this and the previous figure reflect the overall increase in the jail's inmate population over the study period and identify an emerging crowding problem.
What are the Average Daily Population Trends of my Jail?

**County Jail**

**Average Daily Population 1989 to 2002**

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Figure 19. Reporting Average Daily Population (ADP)

Two main factors, admissions and length of stay (LOS), are critical in causing increases in a jail’s inmate population. A change in either or both of these factors can have a significant impact on a jail’s ADP. Careful monitoring of both factors is critical to understanding the population characteristics of a jail. Figure 20 profiles the overall LOS of the inmate population for a given time period. Two data fields are used in a simple formula: release date – book date + 1 = LOS. The figure below examines the contribution to overall jail days of four different LOS categories.
What is the Length of Stay of the Inmate Population?

**County Jail**

*Released Population by Total Days Served in Jail - 2002*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days Served</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
<th>Days Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 3</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>4,818 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 30</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6,825 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 90</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11,643 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 &amp; Over</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16,863 Days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days Served</th>
<th>Total Days Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 3</td>
<td>4,818 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 30</td>
<td>6,825 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 90</td>
<td>11,643 Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 &amp; Over</td>
<td>16,863 Days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40,150 Total Days Served

Figure 20. Reporting Length of Stay (LOS)

The figure illustrates that 69% of all admissions into the jail stay less than 72 hours yet account for only 12% of the jail’s bed resources (bed days). On the other hand, only 8% of the admissions stay in the jail more than 90 days, but this small portion of admissions consumes 42% of bed resources. This disparity is often the case in jails of any size. Examining these data provides useful insights into two policy approaches to crowding control: (1) reducing the number of admissions or (2) considering reducing the overall LOS of inmates, particularly those staying 90 days or more. It is important to understand the degree to which jails are used as in/out processing centers and also the relative contribution to crowding of the “revolving door” population as opposed to the “stayer” population.

**Analyzing Jail Population Using Most Serious Current Offense**

Another simple but important piece of information is the primary or most serious offense of each inmate. To make this information more useful for analysis, it is necessary to categorize individual offenses into broader offense categories, for example, by using Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) codes or other...
categorization schemes. This can be added as an "offense category" field to the offense table dictionary in automated jail management software. If each individual property offense, for example, was tabulated and charted, the information would be unwieldy for communicating broad inmate offense profiles. Collapsing all property offenses into one category makes the data more understandable and useful. Individual offenses within a category can always be isolated for more detailed analysis if necessary.

Figure 21 profiles all jail admissions in the selected time period by most serious offense category and corresponding crime class. Note that it is necessary to eliminate multiple counting of multiple offenses by individual inmates, which would skew the data.

What is the Primary Offense Category and Crime Class for each new Admission During the Period?

**County Jail**

**Primary Offense Category by Crime Class - 2002**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Offense Category</th>
<th>Percent of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assault</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PV’s</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Sup.</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court Vol.</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13,890 Inmates
49% Misdemeanant
51% Felon
12% Female
28 Average Age

Figure 21. Reporting Primary Offense Categories

Inmates' legal and classification status often change during incarceration. As inmates progress across different status levels, correctional staff can intervene in different ways. For example, management options are different for
pretrial inmates versus sentenced inmates, felons versus misdemeanants, and minimum versus maximum security inmates.

To "unpack the data" (i.e., analyze it further) by inmate legal status or classification levels, jail administrators need to collect event dates (e.g., admission, conviction, sentence, classification, and release) for each inmate. Using dates taken from software date fields, administrators can determine the number of inmates and LOS for each processing status by subtracting one date from the other. The administrator also can use such time-based data to isolate inmates who are classified as pretrial, sentenced, or minimum security and can determine the average number of inmates and LOS for each custody status. With these data, jail administrators may better understand the inmate processing flow, identify policy-driven processing bottlenecks, and identify inmates who may be candidates for intermediate sanctions and community corrections programs. Custody status processing bottlenecks may include arraignment to bond, arraignment to conviction, conviction to sentencing, technical probation violation processing, and so on.

**Identifying Classification-driven Inmate Target Populations**

The above examples show that an objective classification system can provide the foundation of a data-driven policy approach to selecting target populations for intermediate sanctions and community corrections. Although classification methods were principally designed to address internal facility management, they also can be designed to identify inmate subpopulations that should be considered for alternatives to incarceration. By charting the security/custody profiles of the total inmate population and its various subpopulations, policy-makers and administrators can better estimate and predict the types of security beds and facilities needed to match the inmate population structure. This quickly produces the insights and begins to identify less risky populations that may be considered for community management considerations. Figure 22 profiles a jail’s inmate population breakdown by security/custody level.
What is the Security and Custody Profile of the Classified Population?

**Figure 22. Reporting Security/Custody Level Profiles**

A simple security profile report such as the one above identifies custody levels that are often a starting point to enhance policy-making regarding crowding management. If a jail and local criminal justice system wishes to reduce the size of their jail population proactively, they must reduce either admissions or LOS. The most obvious and least risky population for consideration is minimum security. Both classification system models (decision tree and additive points) can correctly identify minimum security inmates or presentence detainees who have all of the characteristics of minimum security (medium level 5). The characteristic features of this class of offenders include nonviolent, no prior felony assault record, no escape history, less than three prior felony convictions, no detainers or warrants, and no record of institutional problems. Clearly, some of these offenders may be eligible for pretrial or early release. Local program-specific screening criteria, such as prior failure-to-appear histories, prior community corrections program failure, presence of a local residence, stable
work, willingness to participate, and substance abuse issues, may then be applied to finalize the criteria for either pretrial or early release.

In this way, low-risk, nonviolent inmates thus can be targeted and screened for pretrial or early release as an extension of the jail classification system. Once low-risk, nonviolent inmates are classified and identified, jail administrators and other stakeholders can more clearly explore the program alternatives that may be politically appropriate for such groups.

**The Drill-down Process To Clarify Target Populations**

To explore further these target populations for early release or policy change considerations, it is necessary to drill deeper into the data to determine more specifically who they are and how they are impacting bed resources. In the next example we illustrate this drill-down process by using two data fields previously identified. Specifically, Figure 23 isolates the minimum security population and then further profiles its members using their most serious current offense category and crime class.

**Minimum Security Inmate Profile**

**Primary Offense Category by Crime Class - 2002**

What is the Primary Offense Category of the Minimum Security Inmate Population?
Figure 23. Reporting Primary Offense Categories/Classes

Using outputs such as Figure 23 to profile the target populations, policy-makers can identify more objectively which populations can be considered for early community placement. Political considerations may emerge very clearly from this kind of analysis. For example, the early release of felony drug offenders may be non-negotiable with a judge and therefore should be backed out of the analysis. The figure above suggests a need for further analysis to clarify the number of minimum security inmates who were employed at incarceration versus the number placed in work-release programs. This might clarify whether it is possible to place more employed minimum security inmates on work release as one way to cope with overcrowding.

Once again, using the insight that two primary factors (admissions and LOS) drive jail population, we use the data in Figure 24 to identify how beds are used by the number of admissions in the minimum security target population. To determine the number of beds utilized by the target population, we profile them according to their LOS. In this case, we focus on the number of days served while on minimum security status (i.e., some may have been classified at a higher security level for some portion of the incarceration). The formula used in Figure 24 is release date - classification date (assigned minimum security) +1 = time served at minimum security.
What is the Length of Stay of the Inmate Population While Classified Minimum Security?

### Days Served on Minimum Security Status 2002

![Bar chart showing days served on minimum security status in 2002. The chart indicates that 26% of inmates serve 10 days or less, while 35% serve between 11 and 30 days, 22% serve between 31 and 90 days, and 17% serve 91 days or more.](image)

#### Percent of Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days Served</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 10</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 30</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 90</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 &amp; Over</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**12,446 Total Minimum Days**

Figure 24. Reporting LOS at a Given Security Level

Figure 24 shows that minimum security inmates in this jail account for 34 beds per day \((12,446 \div 365 = 34 \text{ beds per day})\) and that 26% of minimum security inmates are in the jail for 10 days or less. However, a problem is that if this population were targeted for alternative programs (e.g., early release), they would need to be identified at the bench or at admission to make diversion (bed days saved) worthwhile. However, it is also crucial to note that they account for only 10.5% of the minimum security bed days. From this perspective, a far more appropriate target population may be those minimum security inmates who average more than 30 days on minimum security status. This population clearly accounts for the most days served on minimum status and offers more potential days saved in an ADP reduction effort. Additionally, there is time to identify and process these inmates. Another alternative is for them to serve a portion of their sentence prior to release.
Projecting Policy Change Impacts on Jail Population

Following the above type of target group analysis, simple math may be used to project the potential impact of any selected policy changes on the reduction of the size of the jail's population. For example, the data show that in this jail the minimum security population accounted for 34 beds per day. A policy goal may be to divert 50% of the days served by these minimum security inmates. This could be done by releasing these inmates after they serve 50% of their sentences to appropriate and politically acceptable community alternatives to incarceration. The pay-off would be a reduction of 17 beds (one-half of the 34 beds occupied by minimum security inmates on any given day). Simple arithmetic using the earlier data for selected minimum security inmates can reveal the expected number of inmates that need to be served by the early release community program(s). These data in turn would be helpful for program design and budgeting.

The above data-driven example of policy analysis to support administrative planning decisions could be replicated on pretrial populations using the same reporting and analysis procedures. Similar projections can be calculated to forecast the collective impact of any proposed policy change. For example, Figure 25 profiles five different policy scenario options that a jail may explore in regard to various diversion options for its minimum security and pretrial inmate population. The policy options are shown below the figure. The arithmetic is performed to show the impacts of each potential policy on the jail's projected ADP as compared to the trend for future ADP if no policy changes were introduced.
Figure 25. ADP Projections and Potential Policy Scenario Impacts. This figure exemplifies data for a jail with an ADP of 150 and increasing.

**Continuous Population and Policy Monitoring**

If a jail implements certain policy changes, such as early release of minimum security inmates, the ongoing data stream that is derived from classification should be used as an ongoing jail population monitoring system. Automation of classification and reliable data entry into the jail’s MIS is usually preferred for this kind of approach. Such a system can help jail administrators more efficiently monitor and evaluate the impact of any new policies that are used to manage the size of the jail population. **Monitoring should focus on changes in admissions, average LOS of target populations, and overall population characteristics.** Monitoring should assess any changes in the target population compared to a pre-implementation base year. This allows for an assessment of the impact of the new policy. A parallel process evaluation of the integrity with which the new policies have been implemented is also usually mandatory if a full understanding of the effectiveness of the new policy is to be achieved.
A second reason to monitor the jail population is to identify concurrent changes in non-targeted populations. It is well known that jails are very resistant to change and may adjust to new policies in ways that basically maintain the status quo. For example, to ease crowding, a community institutes a new program targeting a specific population but finds later that the jail’s overall daily population rate has not changed. It might be assumed that the new program is failing and should be discontinued. However, a sound monitoring system might indicate that the target population has been significantly reduced but that the void created by saving jail beds from the targeted group is being filled by a different inmate population because of an unexpected system adjustment (e.g., an increase in inmates incarcerated for probation violations or an increase in the number of targeted offenders entering the jail.) The monitoring system also can alert the jurisdiction to other types of system adjustments that sabotage or undermine new policy efforts to control the jail’s population.

The above example suggests that monitoring any jail’s population should be a dynamic and continuous process. The data produced may help to clarify ongoing policy adjustments that are required to adapt to changes in the criminal justice processing and offender characteristics that may also change over time. The merging of objective classification with a good automated information system is needed to develop user-defined statistical outputs to provide the essential components of an ongoing monitoring system.

Classification and Data Linkages with the Courts

A well-designed and comprehensive classification system also allows jail administrators a stronger opportunity to coordinate their decision policies and processing activities with the courts. More specifically, classification data can produce routine reports that can be shared with the courts or individual judges to identify the unsentenced/pretrial population in the jail by the number of days incarcerated and risk levels. Such reports can expedite the arraignment and pretrial and adjudication decision processes. Prosecutors and the courts can use these reports to fast-track felons who are most likely prison-bound because of
their current offense or criminal histories. This, again, can minimize the time that offenders are incarcerated at the local jail.

A second example of using classification data to achieve more effective coordination with the courts occurs when judges must issue early release orders to meet court-imposed caps. Jail administrators using the classification database can provide the courts with lists of nonviolent, low-risk inmates who are most appropriate for early release. These can be ranked in order of security, length of time incarcerated, and seriousness of current offense.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the use of classification at a higher policy-making and administrative planning level. This use of classification data contrasts strongly with the common view that classification is simply a procedure used by line staff for housing and custody decisions. A well-designed objective classification system and the data that support it quickly generate a rich database on both the offender population and the jail processes that govern resource needs and jail projections. Using these data, especially if the system is automated, can generate a wide variety of reports and statistics. Administration, middle managers, and other can use these data to monitor many key correctional policies and procedures and to understand the characteristics of the inmate population and changes over time. By utilizing this information, administrators and policy makers will be armed with the data-driven policy options that they can use in managing an efficient jail, minimizing liability, justifying budgets, managing overcrowding, and so on. The chapter provided several examples in which classification data are used to understand the population of a jail, select target groups for alternative sanctions, and assess potential impacts of alternative crowding control policy scenarios before they are implemented. We view data management and analytical strategies and its convergence with policy decision-making as one of the more rapidly developing areas of expertise that will be required competencies of jail administrators and planners. Paradoxically, the
foundation of such data-driven policy is the presence of a comprehensive database that largely emerges from the classification processes of a jail.
CHAPTER 11

CLASSIFICATION AND INMATE SUPERVISION IN THE SMALL JAIL

Solving Inmate Problems

Even in small jails, certain classes of inmates create significant problems. They may destroy property, use violence, hide contraband, misuse their medications, file frivolous lawsuits, attempt suicide, plan escapes, and so on. Historically, the defense against these types of problems for small jails has involved containment. If the misbehavior continued, greater containment was enforced. The hope was that constraining the troublesome inmate in the right kind of box would solve the problems. Although this approach sometimes works, it often just substitutes one set of problems for another while adding considerably to the expense and agency burden of providing high security single cells for such inmates. The solution is not always found in high security containment, but sometimes in the security that comes from inmate supervision and behavior management.

Any jail that can combine sound inmate classification with effective inmate supervision can expect dividends beyond containing unwanted inmate behavior. The strategy shifts from containing to managing inmates and their behavior. The solution to the problem of unwanted inmate behavior is to combine inmate classification with appropriate supervision. A small jail that combines a valid classification system with active and continuous supervision should be able achieve a good level of behavior management and liability protection.

This mutual reinforcement of valid classification with appropriate supervision should allow even the smallest jail to experience the following benefits:
• Reduced liability and increased defensibility in lawsuits;
• Reduced violence in the inmate population;
• Fewer occasions requiring the use of force to control inmates;
• Fewer inmate grievances or internal affairs complaints;
• Reduced stress levels for inmates and staff;
• Less contraband, vandalism, and other nuisance rule violations;
• Fewer suicide attempts;
• Increased staff control of inmate behavior;
• More efficient use of resources; and
• Better public perception of jail operations.

The basic thrust of this chapter is to explore the elements of effective supervision and to clarify the manner in which this key aspect of jail operation can be combined with sound classification.

**Elements of Effective Inmate Supervision**

We have noted that small jails are often exceptionally good at providing the main elements of effective inmate supervision. In the same way that small communities are often friendlier places to live, smaller jails may provide an environment in which more effective supervision can take place. A smaller structure, a smaller number of staff people, and fewer inmates may enhance the occasions when meaningful interaction can occur between inmates and staff. Proper structuring of these interactions is at the heart of effective inmate supervision. By structuring interaction, we mean encouraging the implementation of policies and practices that contribute to the main constituents of effective inmate supervision as discussed in the following sections.
Active and Continuous Staff Supervision

The most fundamental principle of managing human behavior is the influence that occurs when one human being is present among others. Basically, a person’s behavior is always altered in some way when another is present. The behavior of an inmate pod changes when an officer enters. The dynamic of any situation changes whenever another person enters the mix. If the officer is trained and experienced in skills of inmate supervision, then a powerful force for good (order, cooperation, safety, constructive activity, etc.) has been introduced. The presence of an officer will accomplish what video cameras, informants, locks and keys, and policy and procedures cannot, that is, the improvement of the behavior of an inmate.

Positive Interaction with Inmates

We stress the difference between “observation” and “interaction.” Many corrections officers define their jobs as simply watching inmates. They may jokingly describe themselves as glorified babysitters. By implication their job consists simply of observation with an occasional need to take an active part by stepping in to handle adverse situations. However, active and positive interaction is a different and much more effective tool for modifying inmate behavior than passive observation. Such positive interaction involves more skills than watching or resolving conflicts.

Resolving small problems before they become large ones requires interaction, careful observation, and conflict resolution skills. Positive interaction with inmates should be based on the following activities.

- *Watching, listening, and paying attention to inmates is the beginning of interaction.* Officers can only interact with inmates if they do so on the basis of knowledge and insight. Interaction begins with observation but takes it much further. For example, if inmates are experiencing a problem with someone stealing commissary items, they may behave differently and physically position themselves and their commissary
containers in ways designed to protect their property. The experienced officer will notice this change, sometimes without being aware of the reason behind it. Positive interaction means that once having observed a change in the mood or inmate behavior in a pod, the officer may step up the frequency of his rounds, increase the number of inmates with whom he engages in conversation, and ask open-ended questions to individual inmates when they speak privately. An interactive officer may ask an inmate, “It seems like everyone is sitting on their commissary. Are things coming up missing?” This type of conversation may lead the officer to a solution to the problem before the inmates try to solve it themselves.

- *Treating inmates with respect and consideration and expecting the same from them is a prerequisite to interaction.* Officers who address inmates in a condescending or insulting manner are seldom able to communicate in a meaningful way that will resolve problems before they develop. Productive communication and trust from inmates often only emerge when they have been treated with respect by the officer.

- *Acting in a fair and impartial manner toward all inmates.* This stance may help the officer develop a reputation as a person who can be trusted with information. If such a reputation is established, the officer will generally be able to enter into more productive communications with detainees.

- *Gaining a reputation as an effective problem-solver:* This kind of reputation also enhances interactions. Inmates frequently have little confidence in jail officers’ abilities to solve problems, and may prefer to deal with problems in the pod in their own ways. Unfortunately, inmates’ ways of dealing with problems are often counterproductive to maintaining an orderly facility. Officers who are skilled in problem solving and interacting with inmates are much more likely to be confided in and trusted. Thus, they may be given far more useful information and earlier notification of problems that may be occurring among inmates.
Choosing consistent cooperation as an interactive style: Highly effective officers establish a history of positive interaction with inmates. This may gradually wear down the barriers that exist between officers and inmates. A jail culture of an “us vs. them” mentality pervasively occurs in many jails and results in inmates typically refusing to cooperate. However, repeated instances of positive interaction can break down this paradigm and allow far more effective problem-solving communication.

When jail deputies understand the difference between observation and constructive interaction, they gain more effective control, reduce tensions, and may begin to appreciate advantages of the latter approach. Although it may be easier for a deputy to sit back and simply observe instead of engaging more constructively with inmates, eventually constructive interactions will produce a safer work environment, fewer problems, and less troublesome inmates.

**Officer Presence**

Officer presence is particularly needed in the “hot spot” areas of the jail where problems are most likely to develop. This may include areas that are remote from the officers’ workstations, are hard to observe, or contain the more troublesome types of inmates. **Inmate classification helps in this process by identifying inmates who need more careful supervision and channeling those to a housing plan with carefully chosen locations and supervision arrangements for each type of inmate.**

Recent approaches to jail supervision assert that an officer’s presence is needed more in the housing unit itself than in the hallway outside the housing unit. This is consistent when the primary aim is constructive interaction rather than observation. More interaction can take place when the officer is located in the housing unit. Classification again supports this process by providing the officer with relevant and verified information about inmates, which in turn may increase officers’ awareness and confidence in dealing with the inmates in the housing units. This is particularly true when the facility housing plan, in
conjunction with classification, correctly assigns minimum and medium custody to their own well-defined housing unit, and maximum custody inmates are assigned to the most secure area of the jail.

**Staff Authority and Personal Responsibility**

A common exhortation in modern management is to give employees “ownership” of their areas of responsibility. This is based on a core principle of human behavior: we invest more in the things that we own. This is often learned first as children when we loan a cherished bicycle to a friend only to find that the friend did not treat the bike with the same affection as he treated his own bike. When we returned home with a damaged bike, we learned the second part of this principle because our parents held us accountable for the condition of our property. Being held accountable in this way by our parents may instill a motivation to take better care of items in which we have personal ownership and clear responsibility. In a jail, the principle of ownership generalizes to the great benefit to management by setting up conditions in which the staff assume personal ownership of many of the policies and procedures that are intended to achieve a more orderly and safe housing unit.

An officer who has some autonomy, personal ownership, and clear job responsibility is more likely to judge the conditions of the housing unit where he is working as if it was his own property. Within the parameters of the governing policy and procedure manual, this personal responsibility may be achieved when the officer has some decision-making authority and has bought into the jail’s policy goals. The officer’s decision-making autonomy may extend to such issues as the volume level of conversation, whether the floor will be mopped after every meal, and what minor sanctions to impose for inconsequential misbehavior. If these efforts produce a quiet, clean, and well-behaved housing unit, the officer can justifiably feel proud of his accomplishment. His reputation becomes associated with the orderly operation of his housing unit.
The manner in which a housing unit officer uses his authority and responsibility is well known to exert a strong influence on the behavior of the inmates. Thus, inmates will alter their conduct based on which officer is working in the housing unit. They tend to give an officer the level of behavior that they know he will accept. If the officer has not set limits or does not use his authority to enforce the limits, the inmates will define what is allowed.

Classification supports the officer in these interactions in many ways. Aside from the benefits of better information about inmates and a consistent housing plan, great leverage is provided to the officer by the classification review. In each classification review, the inmate’s recent behavior is given dominant influence in deciding whether the custody level will increase, decrease, or be unchanged. Because privileges are tied to custody status, inmates have a strong stake in these decisions. The unit officer’s input should have a good deal of weight in the classification review. This confers substantial power into the hands of the officer in controlling and influencing the behavior of the inmates in his housing unit.

Staff therefore should assume some level of responsibility and accountability for conditions in the housing units. This builds on the concept of ownership. In many jails, the security staff may adopt a passive, irresponsible stance by blaming everything on the inmates. When staff adopt this style and inmates are left to their own means, then certainly things will deteriorate, just as children will get out of control if the teacher exercises no authority. If housing unit conditions are a reflection on the officer and he is held accountable for them, then he is less likely to condone or overlook poor inmate behavior.

**Tools for Behavior Management**

Imagine trying to build a house with no tools except a hammer. The hammer is an effective tool, but must be supplemented with other tools. Imagine trying to supervise an inmate housing unit with only one tool, such as the threat of segregation. The more tools that security staff have in their tool belts, the more
effective they will be in managing inmate behavior. These tools are discussed in the following sections.

**Higher Expectations for Inmate Behavior**

Humans have a tendency to respond to other people’s expectations. This is sometimes known as the Pygmalion Effect and savvy parents, teachers, coaches, and managers have used it with great success. Jails also can use this principle to help manage inmate behavior, although it clearly requires some interaction between inmates and security staff to communicate these expectations. If a housing unit officer personally explains to inmates that the expectation of the facility is that everyone in this housing unit must make their beds in the morning, participate in clean up, keep the noise down, and treat everyone in the unit with courtesy and respect, inmates are given the choice of meeting these behavior expectations. If stated expectations are consistently reinforced by personal interaction with other inmates, and those who meet the expectations are rewarded, then this becomes an effective tool for establishing good behaviors. However, many officers expect all inmates to behave badly, and this may set a self-fulfilling prophecy into operation. Reclassification reinforces this process by identifying and rewarding inmates who have a pattern of good behavior and grouping them together in more privileged modules.

**A Valid Understanding of Inmates’ Risks and Needs**

The more relevant information that officers have about inmates, the better equipped they will be to elicit cooperative behavior and forestall problems. This is consistent with the traditional adage that “forewarned is forearmed.” For example, the training of automobile salespeople prompts them to ask certain key questions, such as how much the customer is willing to pay, the intended uses of the vehicle, the expectations and needs of the customer’s spouse and so on, of prospective customers. This knowledge helps the salesperson close the sale. The application to managing inmate behavior is clear. The **systematic organization of relevant background knowledge produced by a good**
classification system includes a comprehensive assessment of each inmates' risks and needs, criminal and social history backgrounds, special medical and mental health needs, gang affiliations, protective custody issues, and so on. It is critical that this information is made available to the security staff who are charged with the responsibility of managing the behavior of these inmates.

Thorough Inmate Orientation

A personal, one-on-one orientation session is a critical tool for establishing the staff’s expectations for the behavior and manners of new inmates. As noted earlier, this builds upon most people’s tendency to adopt and fulfill the expectations placed on them. Thus we stress the power and usefulness of a thorough face-to-face inmate orientation.

As an example, we contrast below how two jails might handle an orientation for an inmate who is coming into the jail with a serious charge, one or two felony convictions already, no high school diploma, and a record of minor rule violations in prior detentions.

Jail Number 1 hands the incoming inmate an inmate handbook and sends him up to the housing unit. Jail Number 2 has a classification officer who meets with all new inmates prior to moving them to a housing unit. During this meeting, the classification officer discusses the importance of using the time in jail to make some useful life changes. He points out that with the inmate’s charge and prior record, this time it is possible that the inmate may go to prison. He stresses that the jail will carefully document the inmate’s behavior while in the housing unit and that this documentation will be made available to the court officer who completes the presentence recommendation that goes to the sentencing judge. The officer states that the inmate’s jail behavior record will also be sent to prison, if needed, and the prison classification officers will then use it to determine his custody level. Conversely, he informs the inmate that the jail will reward good behavior, and if the inmate can complete a few weeks in the housing unit with no problems,
the classification officer will arrange to have him transferred into an education program that will enable him to get a GED prior to being sentenced. The officer points out that this will look far better to the sentencing judge, that he thinks the inmate can be successful, and that he will be following his behavior carefully; the officer then provides the inmate handbook and sends him to the housing unit.

Clearly, the second approach is more likely to engender cooperative behavior on the part of the inmate.

**Productive Activities**

The scenario described above included an education program. This is only one of various productive programs that may be offered by jails. Jail managers have consistently reported that programs and productive activities are a powerful means by which to control inmate behavior. When such programs are combined with a system of privileges based on successful participation, they appear to have a potent effect of diminishing unwanted behavior. The opposite occurs when idleness is the general practice and inmates are simply warehoused. With few productive activities and ineffective classification, such jails are usually characterized by extreme disorder and negative behaviors.

**Rewards for Appropriate Behavior**

Another effective tool for jail staff is a carefully calibrated system of positive rewards for appropriate behavior. *Most jail staff understand the importance of sanctions but sometimes neglect the use of positive reinforcement, which is particularly important in small jails that do not have an adequate number of cells for segregation. In such situations, it is important that good behavior is recognized and rewarded.* Many jails have discovered that a classification system with regular classification reviews offers a systematic framework for recognizing and rewarding good inmate behavior.
Effective Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior

The importance of sanctions is clear, but many jail managers may have difficulty effectively administering the segregation of inmates. This requires effective use of available and appropriate kinds of beds. The absence of adequate numbers of beds almost inevitably requires creative juggling of available cells (also see Chapter 7 on housing plans). The classification staff, given their greater access to a large amount of inmate information, is often in the best position to make creative decisions about daily cell management to make an effective segregation process workable in a very small jail.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed various skills and tools that may be used to evoke good behavior from jail inmates and pointed out situations in which classification can assist a jail in providing effective inmate supervision. These tools can be built into the environment of any size jail.
References


