

KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Detentions Bureau Policies and Procedures

TITLE: INCARCERATED PERSON HUNGER STRIKE

H-0600

EFFECTIVE:	REVIEWED:	REVISED:	UPDATED:
June 30, 1990	04-01-2026	11-09-2009	07-11-2024

APPROVED BY: Detentions Bureau Chief Deputy Cindy Cisneros

REFERENCE:

POLICY

The primary responsibility of all staff members during an incarcerated person hunger strike is to protect the health and welfare of the incarcerated person(s) involved. To meet this responsibility, custody staff will actively investigate the causes of the hunger strike and will, whenever possible, seek a reasonable resolution of the hunger strike.

The medical staff will assess and monitor the involved incarcerated person(s) to mitigate the threat to the health of the incarcerated person(s) to the degree possible.

Whenever possible, incarcerated people participating in a hunger strike will be re-housed to administrative separation for better observation. If medical staff determines that the physical condition of such incarcerated person(s) warrants hospitalization or transfer to medical housing, the incarcerated person(s) will be moved accordingly as soon as possible.

DEFINITION(S):

An Incarcerated Person Hunger Strike occurs when an incarcerated person or group of incarcerated persons:

- Refrain from eating for more than 24 hours or;
- Declare that they are on a hunger strike.

Procedure A: Incarcerated Person(s) Engaged in a Hunger Strike

Any staff member discovering a hunger strike will:

- Interview the incarcerated person(s) involved to determine the reason for the hunger strike;

- Notify the shift supervisor;
- Notify the medical staff;
- Generate a JMS Incident indicating:
 - The identity of all incarcerated persons on the hunger strike;
 - The last known time the incarcerated person(s) ate;
 - The reason for the hunger strike.

The Medical Staff will:

- Perform an initial assessment of the incarcerated person(s) within twenty-four hours of notification;
- Monitor the incarcerated persons' health in accordance with the established medical protocols.

The Shift Supervisor will:

- Notify the facility manager.
- Interview the incarcerated person(s) involved and attempt to resolve the issue(s);
- Confer with the medical staff;
- If the incarcerated person is a federal contract incarcerated person, advise the Federal Contract Liaison of the hunger strike. The liaison will notify the appropriate federal agency;
 - If a federal contract incarcerated person on hunger strike is transported to a hospital or requires forced medical treatment administered by medical staff, the Federal Contract Liaison will be advised.
 - The liaison will notify the appropriate federal agency.

The housing officer of the area in which the involved incarcerated person(s) are housed will:

- Ensure that each incarcerated person involved is offered a meal at each mealtime and note the offer in the station logbook;

- Check each involved incarcerated person's commissary slip when commissary is delivered to determine if the incarcerated person(s) are purchasing food items;
- Write a supplemental incident report in JMS after each meal, or when commissary food items are purchased, and indicate whether or not food is consumed or purchased by the incarcerated person(s) on hunger strike;
- When requested by medical staff, take the incarcerated person to the medical clinic;
- Enter the time of the medical checks in the station logbook.
- Ensure that all meal intake forms are accurately documented for each meal.

The Facility Manager will:

- Immediately notify the Detentions Bureau Chief Deputy of the hunger strike through the chain of command;
- Identify the cause of the hunger strike and attempt to mitigate as soon as possible.

Procedure B: Ending a Hunger Strike

When a staff member observes an incarcerated person who is on hunger strike eat any food, the staff member will:

- Interview the incarcerated person to determine if the incarcerated person intends to continue eating;
- Notify the shift supervisor;
- Complete a JMS Incident Supplemental indicating what the incarcerated person ate.

The Shift Supervisor will:

- If warranted, interview the incarcerated person and conduct a further investigation;
- Confer with the medical staff;
- Discontinue the hunger strike procedures (as described Procedure A) unless there is a compelling reason to continue monitoring the incarcerated person's food intake;

- If the hunger strike procedures are continued, the incarcerated person will still be considered to be on hunger strike. The provisions of Procedure A will continue to be followed until the shift supervisor determines there is no longer a compelling reason to continue monitoring the incarcerated person;
- Advise the facility manager of the incarcerated person's status regarding the hunger strike;
- If the incarcerated person is a federal contract incarcerated person, advise the Federal Contract Liaison once the hunger strike has ended. The liaison will notify the appropriate federal agency.

The Facility Manager will:

- Notify the Detentions Bureau Chief Deputy through the chain of command when it is determined that the hunger strike has ended.