

Response to Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report:

Santa Barbara Sheriff-Coroner's Bureau Still an Unhealthy Environment

5/5/2015

Report Summary

- Published February 9, 2015
- The 2014-15 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury has determined the operation of the Bureau is still noncompliant and deficient in six specific areas: policy, training, equipment, facility, testing and documentation.
- This Report is a follow-up to the FY 2012-13 Grand Jury's report on the Coroner's Bureau

Recommended Responses – (Revised) Findings & Recommendations Summary:

- Findings:
 - Partially disagree with:
 - Findings 1 and 2
- Recommendations:
 - Recommendations 1A and 1B
 - Require Further Analysis
 - Recommendation 2
 - Has not been implemented, but will be implemented in the Future
- County Actions:
 - Updating MEC ventilation recommendations
 - 2015-16 GS projects will include the MEC recommendations
 - A new Coroner facility will be added to the CIP

Finding 1

- “The Sheriff-Coroner's Bureau facility does not comply with *California Code Regulations; Title 8, Sections 5144, 5193 and 5199.*”

The Board partially disagrees with the finding:

- The *California Code Regulations* (CCR) referenced in Finding 1 cover a wide range of operational, personal safety and facility related issues. The Board partially disagrees with Finding 1 because 8 CCR §5144 makes clear that the County can comply, through use of appropriate respirators, when protecting County employees from occupational diseases that might be caused by breathing contaminated air.

Finding 2

- “The Sheriff-Coroner's Bureau facility does not have the mechanical and structural systems including negative air pressure which are necessary for the control of infectious diseases, removal of noxious odors and dilution and expulsion of contaminants from the entire facility.”

The Board disagrees partially with the finding:

- The County commissioned a study of all existing facilities as to their condition, repair/maintenance needs and estimated costs to bring them to current standards. This report rated the existing system as poor but did not find the systems inadequate. Despite the systems condition, the Coroner's Unit personnel are able to temporarily override the deficiencies of the existing ventilation system.

Recommendation 1A

- “That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors fund the construction of a new coroner's facility under the "health and safety prioritization" directive of the Board of Supervisors Facility Condition Assessment Reports to become compliant with infectious disease control regulations.”

The recommendation Requires Further Analysis

- The “Jorgensen Report” did not identify the Sheriff-Coroner’s Bureau facility as needing repairs significant enough to require replacement of the facility.
- The General Services Department will include in future Capital Improvement Plans (CIP), a proposed project to construct a new Coroner facility.

Recommendation 1B

- “That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors identify and fund an existing building that could be used to perform the functions of the Coroner's Bureau in a manner compliant with infectious disease control regulations.”

The recommendation Requires Further Analysis

- The “Jorgensen Report” did not identify the Sheriff-Coroner's Bureau facility as needing repairs significant enough to require replacement of the facility.
- The General Services Department will include in future Capital Improvement Plans (CIP), a proposed project to construct a new Coroner facility.

Recommendation 2

- “That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors make funds available to upgrade the structural and mechanical systems of the existing coroner's facility to become compliant with infectious disease control regulations to protect the health and safety of County employees and the public.”

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

- Jorgensen report did not identify the Sheriff-Coroner's Bureau facility as needing replacement.
- Update MEC Ventilation Study.
- GS to complete the work identified in the MEC report during Fiscal Year 2015-2016.

Recommended Actions:

- a) Consider and Adopt responses to the Grand Jury report entitled *Santa Barbara County Sheriff-Coroner's Bureau-Still an Unhealthy Environment*, Attachment B; and
- b) Authorize the Chair to sign a response letter and forward the responses to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court (Attachment A); and
- c) Determine pursuant to CEQA Guidelines 15378(b)(4) that the above actions are not a project subject to CEQA review, because it is a government fiscal activity that does not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment.