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Vilas County Jail (2021) Annual PREA Report

PREA Compliance Efforts in 2021

- The Vilas County Jail contracted with PREAAmerica LLC on 12/19/2019 to conduct a PREA Audit on June 15, 2020. Due to COVID-19 safety concerns, the PREA Audit had to be put on hold until the pandemic became manageable with vaccinations, personal protective equipment and effective treatment for COVID-19. I am able to report that we have a new audit date of May 9, 2022. Preparing for and passing a PREA Audit is a way to make course corrections to stay PREA complaint.
- The Vilas County Finance Committee approved funding to install 39 additional cameras in all of the individual housing cells. The cameras will help increase sexual safety in the jail by allowing corrections officers to monitor individual cells that are currently checked every 45 minutes in person by a correctional officer. Toilets will be censored to give inmates privacy. Uniforms can be changed out in the individual showers to for privacy.
- The jail staff have completed on-line PREA Training through Educorr. The training was approved by our 2018 PREA auditors.
- During the Jail Administrators Conference in October of 2021 we spoke with Kristine Kehoss, Wisconsin Department of Corrections Contract Specialist, PREA Office, Office of the Secretary, about conducting an in-person training in preparation for our 2022 PREA Audit. Ms. Kehoss has agreed to come to the Vilas County Jail and train on the following: PREA definitions, PREA dispositions, responsive and prevention planning, 1st responder duties, investigations overview, Investigation outcomes/incident types, continuum of harm activity, preparation for the audit/staff questions and effective communication skills.
- All posters and signs have been checked to make sure that they are still in place. Posters and signs that are missing were reposted.
- Policy and Procedure as well as our Staffing Plan were reviewed to see if changes needed to be made. No changes were made.

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) is a federal law that was established in 2003 and applies to all correctional facilities and jails. In 2017, Vilas County began to focus on PREA requirements and the need to eliminate, reduce, and prevent sexual assault, abuse, and harassment in all correctional facilities.

Vilas County makes every reasonable effort to comply with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) and all such misconduct shall be investigated immediately to determine the nature of the allegation and the appropriate action to be taken.

In an effort to protect the inmates of the Vilas County Jail from sexual misconduct, there shall be no sexual activity between staff and inmates, nor between inmate and inmate.

Vilas County has a Zero Tolerance policy pertaining to all sexual misconduct, including sexual abuse and harassment. We are working continuously to implement new policies and procedures, including PREA training requirements for staff and inmates, developing standards for detection, prevention, and reduction of sexual misconduct. It is our goal to ensure that all sexual misconduct is reported and investigated accurately and completely.

It is the policy of the Vilas County Jail to respond and thoroughly investigate every allegation of sexual misconduct reported, and to do it in a timely manner. All cases will have a determination of:

Substantiated Allegation: This means a sexual assault/abuse allegation was investigated and determined to have occurred.

Unsubstantiated Allegation: This means a sexual assault/abuse allegation was investigated and the investigation produced insufficient evidence to make a final determination as to whether or not the event occurred.

Unfounded Allegation-Discipline Issue: This means a sexual assault/abuse allegation was investigated and determined not to have occurred, however, discipline was issued due to sexual harassment.

Unfounded Allegation: This means an allegation was investigated and determined not to have occurred.

	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Unfounded Discipline	Unfounded	Ongoing Investigation	Total Reported
Inmate/Inmate PREA Violation	0	0	2	1	0	3
Inmate/Staff PREA Violation	0	0	0	1	0	1

PREA Teams

In an effort to be more effective in the implementation, education, and monitoring of the PREA program, the Vilas County Jail has developed two teams who provide guidance, oversight, and review of all PREA incidents and assist staff with PREA related questions.

PREA Resource Officer Team

We currently have three PREA Resource Officers to assist the facility staff with continued compliance to ensure that all the requirements of PREA are followed during the day-to-day operation of the Vilas County Jail.

PREA Review Team

In 2018, the Vilas County Jail developed a PREA Review Team which consists of members from our medical staff, administration, investigative division, and the PREA Resource Officer Team. They review cases every six months to determine if improvements to investigations, policies/procedures, video monitoring systems, or other areas are necessary. As part of the reviews, we evaluate whether the cases were motivated by gender issues, sexual orientation, religion, and ethnicity/race.

3rd Party Reporting of PREA Violations

We continue to have information posted in each housing unit on the kiosk system to provide information to inmates. Inmates have access to report any time except during lockdown while in the custody of the Vilas County Jail. Anyone needing to report information they may have about PREA violations can contact either of the phone numbers below:

(715) 479-4441 Vilas County Sheriff's Office

(800) 236-1222 Tri-County Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (Advocacy Only)

(715) 479-3795 Vilas County Human Resources

Vilas County Sheriff's Office and Tri-County on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault are staffed and monitored 24 hours day, 7 days a week. Vilas County Human Resources is monitored daily via voice mail.