

# TEXAS COMMISSION ON JAIL STANDARDS


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## MEMORANDUM

To: All Sheriffs and Jail Administrators

FROM: Brandon S. Wood, Executive Director 

RE: Revised Intake Screening Form

DATE: October 22, 2015

To ensure that counties have the best tool available to identify inmates at risk of suicide and individuals with mental illness, the Texas Commission on Jail Standards has revised the intake screening form. With the assistance of a TCOOMMI advisory group and the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, this new form is an objective-based risk assessment that provides clear guidance and instruction to a county jailer of when to notify superiors or shift supervisors, mental health providers, and a magistrate.

Intake screening is the first step and is crucial to determine which inmates require more specialized mental health assessment. The Commission believes that this revised screening form will assist front-line personnel in identifying inmates in need of close supervision and in-depth assessment by mental health professionals.

Though the Commission received the assistance of subject-matter experts, the true test of its usefulness was whether jailers were able to use the form. With that in mind, the revised form was tested in four counties by jailers conducting actual bookings and the form was revised based on their comments. While the revised form has slightly more questions than the current intake form, it should be noted jailers were able to complete the revised form within an average of three minutes.

Several counties may have procedures or processes in place currently that far exceed minimum jail standards. If you believe that your county has such procedures, please notify us as soon as possible to discuss this issue and determine the best course of action.

We further recommend that when you refer an inmate to the magistrate or a qualified mental health professional that you also send them a copy of this form. This will assist them in determining what steps they need to take and hopefully prevent inmates that need services from falling through the gaps.

We request the revised screening form be implemented immediately with a mandatory use by **December 1, 2015**.

If you have any questions, please contact our office.

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