

# Texas Commission on Jail Standards



## 2025 Annual Report February 1, 2026

*Empowering local government to provide safe, secure and suitable local jail facilities through proper rules and procedures while promoting innovative programs and ideas.*

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This report is made pursuant to Chapter 511, Section 511.015 Government Code and covers activities of calendar year 2025.

## **I. Mission Statement**

The mission of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards is to empower local government to provide safe, secure, and suitable local jail facilities through proper rules and procedures while promoting innovative programs and ideas.

During its regular session of 1975, the 64<sup>th</sup> Legislature enacted House Bill 272 creating the Texas Commission on Jail Standards to end federal court intervention into county jail matters and return jail control to state and local jurisdictions. Formerly through Title 81 of the Civil Statutes and currently through Chapters 499 and 511 of the Government Code, the state has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving conditions in the jails by granting the Commission the authority and responsibility to promulgate and enforce minimum standards for jail construction, equipment, maintenance, and operation. Related duties and rules are set forth in Chapters 351 and 361 of the Local Government Code and Title 37 of the Texas Administrative Code which serve as Minimum Jail Standards.

The Commission serves the citizens of Texas with programs and services for the custody, care, treatment, and supervision of adult inmates in county jails. Although we retain the responsibility to regulate privately operated municipal facilities, most of our activities are oriented toward county functions. Our principal operations include on-site inspections of jails to verify compliance with Standards, review of proposed construction and renovation plans to assess conformity to Standards, provision of jail management technical assistance and training, administration of inmate population reports and audits, resolution of inmate complaints, and various other activities relating to policy development and enforcement. Contrary to popular belief, the Commission does not have authority over the state prison system, or juvenile detention facilities. The commission does regulate facilities that house inmates from other states on a contract basis, but we do not have authority to inspect facilities housing only federal inmates, regardless of who operates it.

We work closely with city, county, and state government officials in our duties to enforce jail standards. Our primary relationships are with county judges, commissioners, sheriffs and private management companies to provide consultation and technical assistance; review and comment on plans for construction, modification, and renovation of jails; and conduct regular jail inspections to ensure compliance with state law. Our secondary relationships extend to architectural and criminal justice professional associations and to regulatory agencies concerned with fire safety, legal issues, civil liberties, health, and mental health. Jail inmates awaiting criminal trial or administrative hearings, serving misdemeanor sentences, or awaiting transfer to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice after felony convictions benefit from our efforts by being housed in safe and sanitary environments. The agency also engages with the inmates that are confined in our county jails, their families and advocacy groups that deal with inmates and their conditions of confinement. We provide a service to the citizens of Texas through our Standards, which mandate secure jail design and operation, effective inmate management, use of accepted correctional methods, and programming based on available resources.

## II. Organization

The Commission on Jail Standards is headquartered in Austin, Texas. Our policy-making body consists of nine Commission members appointed by the governor to stagger six-year terms expiring on January 31 of odd-numbered years. The Commission consists of a sheriff from a county with a population of more than 35,000, a sheriff from a county with a population of 35,000 or less, a county judge, a county commissioner, a practitioner of medicine, and four private citizens at least one of whom is from a county with a population of 35,000 or less. The chairperson is designated by the governor, with the vice-chairperson elected by the membership. Our Commission holds quarterly meetings as required. Special meetings are held as needed. Responsibilities of the Commissioners include promulgation, adoption, revision, amendment, and repeal of rules; enforcement of rules through remedial action or action in district court; and consideration of applications for variances from minimum standards. Members are not compensated for their work except for allowable travel and per diem expenses.

Commission members as of December 31, 2025, were as follows:

Member	City	Term Expires
Judge Bill Stoudt, Chair	Longview	2025 *
Sheriff Kelly Rowe, Chair	Lubbock	2029 **
Dr. Esmaeil Porsa, M.D., Vice-Chair	Houston	2029
Judge Joseph Fauth III	Plantersville	2031
Commissioner Ben Perry	Waco	2029
Sheriff Richard Kirkpatrick	Kingsville	2027
Patricia Anthony	Garland	2031
Monica McBride	Alpine	2031
Mr. Duane Lock	Southlake	2029
Mr. Ross Reyes	Longview	2027

\*Judge Stoudt retired from the agency effective 10/20/2025

\*\* Sheriff Rowe was appointed Chairman of the Board on 10/20/2025

During 2025, the Commission had 28 allotted positions. Due to an end of year retirement, staffing increased briefly to 29 to train the replacement. Staff consisted of the following 29 positions as of December 31, 2025. We ended 2025 with no vacancies. Positions were as follows:

Executive Director	E-086
Systems Analyst VII	B28
Manager II	B23
Compliance Analyst III (Critical Inc.)	B23
Manager I (2 positions)	B22
Purchaser V	B21
Staff Services Officer IV	B20
Human Resources Specialist III	B20
Program Specialist IV (2 positions)	B20
Planner II	B20
Inspector V (10 positions)	B20
Program Specialist III (1 position)	B19
Program Specialist II (5 positions)	B18
Program Specialist I (MH Trainer)	B17

### III. **Agency Objectives & Funding**

The Commission fulfills its mission by allocating its resources and carrying out its statutorily mandated duties through five distinct but related strategies. Although inspection of jail facilities and enforcement of Minimum Jail Standards is our most critical and visible strategy, the Commission's remaining four strategies are vital as well and assist counties in achieving and maintaining constitutional standards—the primary goal of the agency.

National research, statewide input, and case law are among the resources considered when developing or revising the Standards. The Commission reviews, creates, and amends minimum standards for the purpose of building and maintaining safe, secure, and efficient jail operations. The Commission approves proposed revisions to the Standards and publishes them in the Texas Register for public comment. The Commission considers the public comments to determine whether the proposed standards need further amendment. The Commission then reviews the final version for adoption and, if adopted, publishes it again in the Texas Register.

In 2023, the Commission began the process of reviewing all jail standards and rules on a 4-year rotating schedule.

In addition to the appropriated funds, the agency charges inspection fees to cover the cost of inspecting facilities housing 30% or more non-Texas sentenced inmates or for conducting a re-inspection if the areas of non-compliance have not been corrected.

To meet agency objectives, each strategy is allocated a specific number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions.

#### **A. Inspection & Enforcement**

(15 full-time positions) Inspection activities consist of fair and impartial monitoring and enforcing compliance of adopted rules and procedures. Of these 15 positions, 2 were dedicated to Border Security as part of Operation Lone Star and related activities. This objective includes the development and implementation of a uniform inspection process. Uniform inspection reports and procedures for inspecting jail facilities are developed under the provisions of Chapters 351 and 361 of the Local Government Code and Chapter 511 of the Government Code.

As a result of this agency's Sunset Review, the agency has moved from an annual inspection schedule to a "Risk-Based" inspection process. The agency has presented at the Sheriffs Association conference and the Texas Jail Association Conferences, explaining the new risk-based inspection process. The agency has also sent TA memos to all counties in regard to the risk-based inspection process. Inspectors have also presented at the Correctional Management Institute of Texas Jail Administrators Management and Operations class.

The frequency and extent to which facilities under Commission jurisdiction are inspected will be determined by the risk level of each facility. Commission staff shall perform at least one comprehensive inspection of each facility under Commission jurisdiction every twenty-four months. Limited compliance inspections and special inspections shall be used when deemed appropriate by the risk level of the jail.

The comprehensive inspection will determine compliance with minimum jail standards. The inspectors review the jail's security, control, and general conditions, and they look at not only the operation of the facility, but also its physical plant. Special inspections are conducted on facilities that have either been identified as high-risk or found to be non-compliant. Re-inspections are unannounced inspections that will be performed when county officials indicate that the non-compliant items have been corrected, in which case the inspector will personally examine the areas that require correction or review documentation that demonstrates compliance. This will prove crucial when the issues involve safety and/or security issues. A percentage of all Re-Inspections will be Comprehensive Inspections.

The Executive Director reviewed all inspection reports, and, if the facility was found to be in compliance, a certificate of compliance was mailed to the facility. However, if the inspector noted deficiencies, a notice of non-compliance was issued, which specified the standards with which the facility had failed to comply and included

detailed steps the jail was required to take to correct the deficiencies. The notice of non-compliance was sent via certified mail.

#### **B. Construction Plan Review**

(2 full-time positions) The construction facility planning staff provides consultation and technical assistance to local governments for jail construction that meet Standards. There is extensive consultation and interaction with state and local officials, design professionals and consultants. Staff review plan documents at three phases: schematic design, design development, and construction documents. At each phase, staff note items requiring resolution and satisfaction prior to proceeding to the next phase. This process assists in ensuring that counties understand jail requirements and helps to provide more efficient, effective, and economic jails that comply with Minimum Standards. On-site consultations are desirable when possible and are often a more productive method of consultation with designers, architects, construction contractors, sheriffs, and other county officials once construction has begun. Upon a county's request, the facility planning staff also analyze facility needs using population projections and other pertinent data to help counties determine their future incarceration needs.

#### **C. Management Consultation**

(5 full-time positions and 1 part-time 80%) Commission staff also provide needed jail management training and consultation to county representatives in person in our Austin office and by phone, written correspondence, regional training classes, and on-site visits. Staff provide on-going technical assistance on matters such as structural issues, life safety, and overall jail operations. Staff also analyze jail staffing needs to assist counties in operating safe and secure facilities and in developing and implementing operational plans that meet Minimum Standards. Texas county jails operate under 17 required plans that ensure safety, order, and essential services. These plans cover emergency response, fire prevention, and sanitation; inmate classification, medical care, and mental-health needs; and the rules, discipline, and grievance processes that guide daily conduct. Additional plans guarantee access to communication through phones, mail, and visitation, while others provide recreation, education, library services, commissary access, and religious accommodations. Together, these plans create a comprehensive framework for safe operations and inmate well-being. This strategy is important because it focuses on assisting counties to achieve and maintain compliance with Standards as well as creating a comprehensive framework for safe operations and inmate well-being, thereby reducing county liability. Staff also provides Mental Health training for jailers to include Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), required annual Suicide Prevention training, and other training at annual conferences throughout the year.

#### **D. Auditing Population & Costs**

(1 part-time position 20%) This strategy requires collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data concerning inmate populations, felony backlog, immigration,



licensed jailer turnover, and jail operational costs. Commission staff assist counties with completing their jail population reports and provides technical assistance. Commission staff continues to collect, analyze, and provide statistical data to agencies that help them predict and prepare for incarceration trends at the state and local levels. They also receive audits of the commissary and general operations of the county jails. Staff analyze these audits to assess jail program costs and to develop Average Daily Cost estimates—information that is often requested by other state agencies and counties as well as members of the Legislature.

In addition, effective September 1, 2022, The Commission transitioned to an online portal, which allows counties to submit their population data online. Throughout 2025, The Commission has continued to improve and work on its portal system so counties can directly import their data and forms into the portal and review their historical submissions. The commission anticipates that all work on the portal will be completed by the end of 2026, but ongoing costs to update and add new reports will continue.

#### **E. Indirect Administration**

(4 full-time positions and 1 part-time position) Indirect administration strategy accounts for functions such as finance, human resources, and IT, which had previously been allocated among the five existing strategies. This not only allows for a more accurate representation of the funds and resources utilized for each of the five primary strategies but also allows the agency to properly budget and plan for activities not directly tied to a particular strategy, such as IT needs, which would support employees assigned to several different strategies.

### **IV. 2024 Operational Performance in Review**

#### **A. Changes to Standards**

##### **§263.1 General Purpose**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §263,1, concerning life safety in county jails, to require that county jails comply with standards as adopted by The Texas Department of Insurance under Government Code 417. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

##### **§263.1 General Purpose**

All facilities shall be designed, constructed, maintained, staffed, and operated to:

- (1) provide for proper compartmentation;
- (2) provide for the prompt detection, alarm, and extinguishing of fires and the avoidance of any explosion;
- (3) provide for a mechanical smoke management system and other emergency equipment;

- (4) provide (and file with the Commission) plans, programs, drills, and training for emergencies, as required under §263.40 and §263.41 of this title (relating to Plans and Drills for Emergencies).
- (5) comply with standards as adopted by The Texas Department of Insurance under Government Code 417.

#### **§263.12 Additions/New Construction**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §263.12, concerning life safety in county jails, updating references to the National Fire Protection Association's standards and adds language as suggested by the State Fire Marshal's Office. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

##### **§263.12 Additions/New Construction**

New facilities, new additions, and major renovations to existing facilities shall:

- (1) be constructed of fire resistive, noncombustible materials. Single story, minimum security facilities may use wood framing when provided as part of an Underwriters Laboratory fire rated assembly, appropriate for the application, provided exterior walls, interior walls, and ceilings are of fire resistive materials. Roof materials shall meet Class C criterion unless superseded by local code requirements;
- (2) have dividing fire and smoke partitions between floors, between compartments, and in corridors with self-closing fire doors or normally closed power operated swinging or sliding detention doors;
- (3) have Class A interior finish materials on all interior surfaces (flame spread 0-25, smoke developed 0-450 in accordance with ASTM E84 "Standard Test Method for Surface Burning Characteristics of Building Materials" and UL 723 standards);
- (4) be designed for isolation of fires, riots, or other emergencies;
- (5) provide means of egress components consisting of doors, stairs, and smoke proof enclosures (in multistory facilities), horizontal exits, and passageways in accordance with NFPA 101 Life Safety Code §14.2 concerning Means of Egress Components as appropriate for the occupancy type such as Business or Detention.

#### **§263.15 Design and Materials**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §263.15, concerning the illumination of exits in county jails, which updates the requirements for illumination of discharge stairways to conform to the State Fire Marshal's Office recommended comments received during review. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

##### **§263.15 Design and Materials**

All corridors and passages to exits, the exits themselves, and other means of egress shall be continuously illuminated at all points with not less than 1.0 foot candle measured at the floor, and shall be so arranged that the failure of any lighting unit or bulb will not leave any area in darkness. Discharging stairways shall be

continuously illuminated at all points with not less than 10 foot candle measured at the floor, and shall be so arranged that the failure of any lighting unit or bulb will not leave any area in darkness.

#### **§263.19 Hazardous Area Protection**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §263.19, concerning life safety in county jails, to make grammatical corrections. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

##### **§263.19 Hazardous Area Protection**

(a) Areas used for general storage, boiler or furnace rooms, fuel storage, storage for chemicals or cleaning supplies, maintenance shops including woodworking and painting areas, laundries, and kitchens, shall be separated from other parts of the building with two-hour fire resistive construction with openings protected with automatic or self-closing one-half hour fire rated assemblies. When the hazardous area is protected by automatic sprinkler protection, the separation may be of one hour fire resistive construction with openings protected with automatic or self-closing 20-minute fire rated assemblies.

(b) Cooking facilities producing grease laden vapors shall have an approved automatic fire extinguishing system protecting cooking surfaces and hood and duct systems serving the cooking equipment in accordance with NFPA 96, Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations.

(c) Where hazardous processes or storage areas are of such a character as to introduce an explosion potential, explosion venting or an explosion suppression system specifically designed for the hazard shall be provided. The use of combustible supplies and permitting of hazardous material and trash to collect shall be minimized and avoided where possible.

#### **§263.30 General**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §263.30 which clarifies references and conforms to recommended language as provided by the State Fire Marshal's Office during TCJS' four-year rule review. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

##### **§263.30 General**

An automatic fire detection and alarm system shall be provided for all facilities in accordance with NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code. The system shall include:

- (1) automatic fire detection for all areas of the facility;
- (2) manual fire alarm pull station for staff use;
- (3) audio and visual devices shall be installed at continuously staffed locations.

### **§263.32 Periodic Testing**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §263.32, concerning periodic testing of fire alarm systems in county jails, and specifies how fire alarm system shall be tested. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

#### **§263.32 Periodic Testing**

The fire alarm system shall be tested in accordance with the inspection, testing, and maintenance schedules in NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code and shall be tested at least on calendar quarterly intervals.

### **§263.33 Notification of Others**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §263.33 concerning fire alarm system notification of others in county jails, and adds a reference to the National Fire Protection Association regarding how fire alarm systems shall be supervised. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

#### **§263.33 Notification of Others**

The fire alarm system shall be supervised in accordance with NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code, to facilitate the notification of the local fire department.

### **§263.40 Plans**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §263.40, concerning life safety plans in county jails, and made grammatical corrections. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

#### **§263.40 Plans**

Each facility shall have and implement a written plan, approved by the commission, for escapes, riots, assaults, fires, evacuations, rebellions, civil disasters, and any other emergencies. Each plan shall provide for:

- (1) use and response to alarms;
- (2) notification of and access for:
  - (A) fire department;
  - (B) emergency medical service;
  - (C) other law enforcement officials;
- (3) isolation of emergency areas;
- (4) prompt release and evacuation of emergency areas (including non-ambulatory inmates);
- (5) prevention of escapes during evacuations;
- (6) fire suppression and extinguishment, rendering of prompt medical aid and quelling disturbances; and
- (7) protection of staff during emergencies.

### **§263.50 Emergency Electrical Power**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §263.50, concerning emergency electrical power in county jails, and makes grammatical corrections. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

#### **§263.50 Emergency Electrical Power**

(a) New facilities, new additions, and major renovations to existing facilities shall be equipped with an emergency back-up electrical generator designed to operate both manually and automatically upon interruption of the primary electrical power source. The system shall be capable of operating uninterrupted for a minimum period of one- and one-half hours without refueling. Back-up electrical power shall be provided for necessary equipment and life safety systems including, but not limited to:

- (1) emergency illumination systems;
- (2) exit signs;
- (3) smoke management systems;
- (4) fire detection and alarm systems;
- (5) audible communication systems;
- (6) security/control systems;
- (7) normal ventilation systems required for smoke detection.

(b) Existing facilities shall provide emergency illumination, and this may be accomplished by utilizing a battery back-up system capable of continuous operation for one and one-half hours.

### **§263.51 Smoke Management**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §263.51, concerning smoke management in county jails, and added references to the National Fire Protection Association's standards with titles. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

#### **§263.51 Smoke Management**

(a) General. Jails shall have a sufficient means of managing smoke from a fire to permit orderly movement of inmates from the area of a fire incident. Smoke management shall limit the exposure of staff to untenable conditions when responding to a fire emergency. The means of smoke management shall be a combination of compartmentation, control of smoke migration from the affected area, and means of removing smoke to the exterior of the building. The smoke management system shall include the consideration of:

- (1) automatic and manual fire detection;
- (2) automatic and manual fire alarm system;
- (3) automatic and manual smoke control system activation;
- (4) automatic and manual fire suppression system;
- (5) maintenance of reliable means of egress;
- (6) movement of inmates from affected area to an area of refuge;

- (7) containment of smoke to area of fire origin;
- (8) automatic and manual removal of smoke.

(b) Coverage.

- (1) Smoke management shall be provided throughout all detention and support areas within the security perimeter.
- (2) Mechanical smoke control systems and smoke removal systems shall be provided for all inmate housing areas, including cells, day rooms, dormitories, and special purpose cells.
- (3) For the purpose of smoke control and smoke removal systems, the affected area shall be deemed to be the compartment consisting of a cell, day room, dormitory, or special purpose cell, in which the fire incident originates. Where open grating or mesh walls are used, the affected area shall be restricted to the cell(s) and the adjacent day room.

(c) Compartmentation. Smoke barriers shall be provided in accordance with NFPA 101 Chapter 22.3.7 and Chapter 23.3.7 concerning Subdivision of Building Spaces.

(d) Control of Smoke Migration.

- (1) The smoke detection system shall promptly detect smoke within the affected area.
- (2) Upon detection, a fire alarm system shall automatically alert the control station(s) and initiate the automatic smoke control system.
- (3) The smoke control system shall automatically, by pressure differential and/or air flow, contain smoke in the area of fire origin.
- (4) Smoke control systems shall be designed so that smoke is restricted from entering the means of egress during the evacuation of inmates by providing sufficient air flow through exit access doors, when open.
- (5) A manual override capability shall be provided in the event of detection failure and for testing purposes.

(e) Smoke Removal.

- (1) All jails shall be provided with smoke removal capability, except as provided under subsection (g) of this section, relating to exceptions.
- (2) The smoke removal system shall have the ability to remove smoke from the affected area to the exterior of the building using fixed mechanical equipment. Existing facilities (in operation prior to December 23, 1976) may be exempt from using fixed equipment when portable equipment is provided.
- (3) During smoke removal, smoke shall not migrate from the affected area to other areas of the building.
- (4) Smoke removal systems shall be designed to develop air flow patterns within the affected area which contribute to the dilution and removal of smoke. Air devices for supply and exhaust shall be separated by a distance of not less than 75% of the horizontal dimensions of the compartment and so arranged to provide air flow coverage of at least 50% of the vertical dimension of the compartment. Alternate air device configurations which have demonstrated effectiveness by field testing or mock-up testing may be approved.

(5) Capacity of the smoke removal system shall be sufficient to comply with subsection (f) of this section relating to smoke testing. Facilities in operation or initiated prior to March 31, 1991, which are not provided with a complete smoke management system (as required by this section) shall provide smoke removal capability, being automatically activated by the smoke detection system when utilizing fixed equipment, meeting the smoke testing criteria established by the commission on September 27, 1989. Designs for smoke removal systems which provide air change rates of less than 15 air changes per hour shall not be utilized. Design consideration shall be given to system configuration, friction loss, pressure drops and differentials, air leakage, and other construction characteristics, which may necessitate safety factors being included in design calculations.

(6) A manual override capability shall be provided in the event of detection failure and for testing purposes.

(f) Testing.

(1) General. Testing of the smoke management systems in all facilities shall be in compliance with the requirements of this section.

(2) Functional Testing.

(A) Air Balancing Certification. Prior to any other testing of new smoke management systems, an air balance report prepared in accordance with nationally recognized practices shall be submitted to the county. Such report shall bear certification that the smoke control and removal systems meet the engineer of record's design requirements with respect to pressure differentials achieved and air flow rates necessary to meet the intended smoke management operation. A copy of the air balance report shall be maintained at the facility and made available to the commission's inspector during all tests and inspections. An air balance report on an existing system may be required by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards when there is evidence that the smoke management system has been impaired due to modifications to the system or inadequate maintenance.

(B) System Operation. A test of smoke management system's initiating devices and control systems' output shall be performed. Such testing shall verify that, upon activation of a smoke detector, water flow indicating device, manual fire alarm station, or other smoke management system initiating device, the smoke management system components will automatically commence operation. The engineer of record shall provide a "cause and effect" chart to indicate the appropriate smoke management operating mode for all affected equipment based on the operation of each initiating device. Acceptance of functional testing shall be predicated upon all input and output devices performing as indicated by the "cause and effect" chart.

(3) Smoke Testing.

(A) General smoke testing of the smoke management systems shall be accomplished in accordance with this section. The smoke management system shall be tested in both normal and emergency power modes.

(B) Smoke Detection. Artificial smoke shall be introduced into the space to be tested. The rate of introduction of smoke shall be two times the volume of the space to be tested. The commission may establish a minimum amount of smoke to be introduced into a space. The smoke detection system shall alarm and initiate the

smoke control and removal system(s) within 60 seconds of the beginning of smoke introduction.

(C) Smoke Migration. The smoke management system shall be deemed to be controlling smoke migration if smoke from the detection test does not migrate from the affected area for a period of ten minutes from the time of detection and activation of the smoke control system. The inspector may conduct the smoke migration test with the compartment exit door open or closed.

(D) Smoke Removal. Utilizing the procedure for testing smoke detection, smoke removal shall be completed in the space to be tested within fifteen minutes from the time of system activation.

(4) Maintenance and Retesting. The smoke management systems shall be regularly maintained to assure consistent performance. The smoke management systems shall be operationally tested quarterly and may be tested by the commission's inspector on an annual basis utilizing the smoke testing procedures.

(g) Exceptions.

(1) Fully sprinklered, minimum security facilities may be exempt from these requirements if approved by the sheriff, the local fire marshal, and the commission; however, smoke detection and alarm systems shall be provided for all facilities. Approval shall be based on review of each facility, the degree of overall protection achieved, and a high degree of freedom of movement afforded the inmates. Such facilities shall be inspected by local fire protection authorities monthly.

(2) Single story, new construction, minimum security facilities whose exit doors are incapable of being locked from the inside and which provide direct exiting to the exterior of the building from the inmate sleeping area(s) and day room(s) may be constructed without smoke control, smoke removal, or sprinkler systems. However, these facilities shall provide proper compartmentation and smoke detection.

(3) Facilities that were in operation or initiated prior to March 31, 1991, and which comply with subsection (e) of this section, relating to Smoke Removal, may be exempt from other requirements of this section relating to smoke management.

#### **§263.52 Standpipes and Hoses**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §263.52, concerning standpipes and hoses in county jails, added references to the National Fire Protection Association standards, and made grammatical corrections. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

##### **§263.52 Standpipes and Hoses**

Each facility shall be furnished with an approved wet NFPA 14, Standard for the Installation of Standpipe and Hose Systems, Class III standpipe and hose system (located to permit quick deployment to all inmate occupied areas) for use by fire department personnel and staff. Partial or complete automatic fire sprinkler systems with appropriate sprinkler heads may be provided. Facilities equipped with complete automatic fire sprinkler systems, in accordance with NFPA 13, Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems, may reduce the system to an NFPA 14, Standard for the Installation of Standpipe and Hose Systems, Class I system. A one-



inch non collapsible hose and reel system may be used in lieu of the one and one-half inch collapsible hose when approved by local fire officials. Existing facilities may request a variance from this requirement.

#### **§263.53 Portable Fire Extinguishers**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §263.53, concerning portable fire extinguishers in county jails, adding a reference to the National Fire Protection Association standards. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

##### **§263.53 Portable Fire Extinguishers**

Portable fire extinguishers of the number, size, and type, and in appropriate locations or in accordance with NFPA 101, Life Safety Code and NFPA 10, Standard for Portable Fire Extinguisher shall be provided.

#### **§263.54 Equipment**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §263.54, concerning life safety and storage of life safety equipment in county jails, making grammatical corrections. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

##### **§263.54 Equipment**

All life safety equipment shall be out of reach of inmates or otherwise secured from unauthorized tampering. At least one self-contained breathing apparatus shall be available and maintained in or near each facility control station. All staff shall be trained, and quarterly drills conducted in the use of this equipment. A minimum of one unit shall be provided for each building of a multibuilding facility and on each floor of a multistory facility.

#### **§265.13 Verify Veteran Status**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §265.13 concerning the verification of inmate veteran status in county jails, to comply with SB 293889(R). This amendment requires a county jail to verify an inmates' veteran status during the intake process. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

##### **§265.13 Verify Veteran Status**

(a) Each sheriff/operator shall investigate and verify the veteran status of each prisoner by using data made available from the Veterans Reentry Search Service (VRSS) operated by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs or similar service during intake, prior to housing.

(b) Each sheriff/ operator shall provide assistance to prisoners identified as veterans, identified through either self-report or the VRSS, in applying for federal benefits or compensation for which the prisoners may be eligible under a program

administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Assistance includes, but not limited to, direct assistance by qualified claims counselor, issuance of a referral card, or similar assistance.

(c) Each sheriff shall maintain a log of positive VRSS returns with identifying prisoner number and whether a referral card was issued to the identified veteran prior to his or her release. If a referral card was not issued, a reason shall be provided on the log. A report shall be provided to the Texas Veterans Commission of positive identification of veteran status weekly.

#### **§279.1 Sanitation Plan**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §279.1, concerning sanitation plans for county jails, requiring county jails to include a method to allow handwashing prior to meals being served in holding cells. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

##### **§279.1 Sanitation Plan**

Each facility shall have and implement a written plan, reviewed and approved by the commission, for the maintenance of an acceptable level of cleanliness and sanitation throughout the facility. Such plan shall provide for:

- (1) a regular daily schedule for the work and inspections necessary to keep the facility clean; which schedule shall be assigned and supervised by jailers who have the responsibility for keeping the facility clean and making regular sanitation inspections;
- (2) water and sewage systems not part of a public system and food preparation areas shall be inspected at least annually by health authorities and record kept for each inspection;
- (3) adequate and safe cleaning equipment;
- (4) water tight garbage containers with tight fitting covers in the kitchen;
- (5) the maintenance of toilets, lavatories, showers, and other equipment throughout the facility in good working order;
- (6) the maintenance of all counters, shelves, tables, equipment, and utensils with which food or drink comes into contact in a clean condition and in good repair;
- (7) clean washing aids, such as brushes, dishcloths, and other hand aids used in dish washing operations and for no other purposes;
- (8) a well ventilated place for storing and drying mops and other cleaning tools;
- (9) the continuous compliance of the water system and sewage system with the minimum requirements for such public systems;
- (10) the prohibition of excessive storage of food in cells and day rooms.
- (11) a method to allow hand washing prior to meals being served in holding cells.

#### **§291.4 Visitation Plan**

The Commission adopted an amendment to rule §291.4, regarding visitation plans in county jails, to comply with SB 2938 89(R). The amendment requires a county jail to allow certain visitation to inmates whose veteran status has been confirmed. This amendment was reviewed by the TCJS Administrative Rules Advisory Committee

and recommended for adoption to the Commission. The rule was adopted as follows:

#### **§291.4 Visitation Plan**

Each facility shall have and implement a written plan, approved by the commission, governing inmate visitation. The plan shall:

- (1) indicate frequency of visitation periods; each inmate shall be allowed a minimum of two in-person, noncontact visitation periods per week of at least 20 minutes duration each;
  - (A) Facilities exempt from in-person visitation shall be determined by the provisions set forth in Government Code §511.009(20)(a-1).
  - (B) The requirement of in-person visitation does not remove a sheriff's/operator's authority to limit visitation for disciplinary reasons as per 37 TAC §283.1.
- (2) provide that at least one visitation period be allowed during evenings or weekends;
- (3) provide for reasonable attorney/client visitation;
- (4) provide for inmates whose veteran status has been verified to have in-person or video visitation with the veterans county service officer for the county or a peer service coordinator, at no cost to the inmate. These visits may not be counted towards the minimum allowed visits;
- (5) provide procedures for the selection of visitors, including inmates' minor children. Accompaniment by parent, guardian, or legal counsel may be required. The Sheriff/operator shall provide procedures regarding visitation by a guardian. The procedures shall include placement of a guardian, at the guardian's request, on the inmate's visitation list, and provide the guardian access to the inmate during regular visitation hours to an eligible inmate. A guardian's visit shall be in addition to normal visitation. The sheriff/operator shall require the guardian to provide the sheriff/operator with letters of guardianship as provided by §§1002.012, 1106.001 - 1106.003, Estates Code, before allowing visitation with the inmate;
- (6) define procedures where contact visitation is permitted;
- (7) contain procedures for emergency visitation.

#### **B. Jail Inspections**

During Calendar Year 2025, the agency has completed its shift to the risk-based inspection process. A total of 122 comprehensive jail inspections were performed by inspectors. During the year 2025, staff conducted 92 special inspections of high-risk and/or non-compliant jails. During the year 2025, inspectors conducted 130 Limited Compliance Inspections that did not result in a special inspection. In addition, 70 notices of non-compliance were issued to jails due to a Comprehensive or Special inspection. Of the non-compliant jails, 63 received an administrative reinspection. In total, 347 inspections were conducted, all of which were unannounced.

### **1. Compliant Counties**

At the beginning of 2025, 225 jails (93.0%) complied with Minimum Jail Standards. As of December 31, 2025, we have 224 certified jails (comprising 94.51%) of the county and private facilities under our regulatory review

Staff conducted sixteen (16) occupancy inspections on completed construction projects during 2025.

### **2. Noncompliant Counties**

On December 31, 2025, 13 jails were in a status of noncompliance, representing 5.48% of the facilities on the inspection list. We issue notices of non-compliance in three categories: Life Safety, Management, and Construction. In most instances, the counties receiving the notices have taken positive and responsible action toward eliminating cited deficiencies to meet the requirements of state law. We requested counties to appear before the Commission to address the corrective action necessary by the Commission if the Commission believed the counties were not acting expeditiously to resolve their deficiencies. As a result of these meetings, the Commission issued a remedial order to six (6) counties/facilities (Cherokee, Leon, Rains, Robertson, Bexar, Runnels. While the remedial order for Harris and Liberty and Falls Counties remains in effect from 2024.) Commission staff conduct monthly progress reviews of noncompliant counties to assess the status of these facilities as they move toward compliance with Minimum Jail Standards.

### **3. Closed Jails**

Presently, 22 counties have closed jails. Rather than maintaining their own facility, the following counties opted to board their few inmates in an adjacent county:

Armstrong	Baylor	Borden	Briscoe
Coke	Concho	Cottle	Fisher
Floyd	Foard	Glasscock	Hartley
Irion	Jeff Davis	Kenedy	Kent
King	Loving	McMullen	Motley
Sterling	Throckmorton		

#### **A. Construction Plan Review**

The Commission reviewed 9 construction/renovation documents. Several counties are embarking upon renovations of aging facilities while others are planning new facilities to replace well-worn facilities or to add additional beds to meet local needs.

## 1. Construction Completed

The following two (2) counties opened a new facility during the year. These projects represented a total of 118 beds:

List of completed projects	# of beds
Coryell County Courthouse Leon Street Annex	0
Ward County Jail	118

## 2. Major Renovations/Additions Completed

The following ten (10) counties completed major renovations or additions during the year.

List of Renovations/ Additions	# of beds
Bell County Jail Loop	517
Collin County Jail	0
El Paso County Jail	0
Fayette County Jail	1
Frio County Jail	8
Hays County Jail	0
Parker County Jail	14
Randall Detention Center	96
Washington County Jail	0
Wood County Jail	28

All construction and renovation/additions projects totaled 664 beds.

## 3. Jails under Construction or Planning

At the end of 2025, 28 counties were involved in planning or construction projects that will result in 1,356 beds upon completion. This figure is an estimate based on projects identified on January 1, 2026, and scheduled for completion by December 31, 2026; other projects identified during the year may cause this number to be adjusted further. In addition to plan reviews, the Planning Department completed eleven (11) Facility Needs Analysis, which assisted counties in determining their future jail needs.

## B. Management Consultation

The Commission provided technical assistance to county officials throughout the year on jail matters, such as alternative programs, population control, structural issues, life safety, and overall operations. Although the Commission does not log telephone calls, it estimates that it received several thousand telephone calls during the year for technical assistance regarding jail management and operations. In

addition, the Commission conducted three (3) in-house management consultations at the Austin office; as in previous years, a majority of meetings are being conducted remotely. It also conducted 260 management consultations on-site with County Judges, Commissioner's Courts, and Sheriffs concerning the most economical and feasible ways to achieve compliance with state law, and, in some cases, with federal court orders. Four (4) counties received assistance with analysis of jail staffing needs, and 1,363 operational plans were reviewed by staff during the year. Lastly, the Commission issued six (6) Technical Assistance memorandums statewide:

May 2025 – Complaint Documentation

August 2025 – New Legislation

August 2025 – Out of State Housing

August 2025 – Required Pregnant Inmate Study

September 2025 – Changes to Minimum Jail Standards

December 2025 – SB8 89(2) Bathroom Utilization Determined by Biological Sex

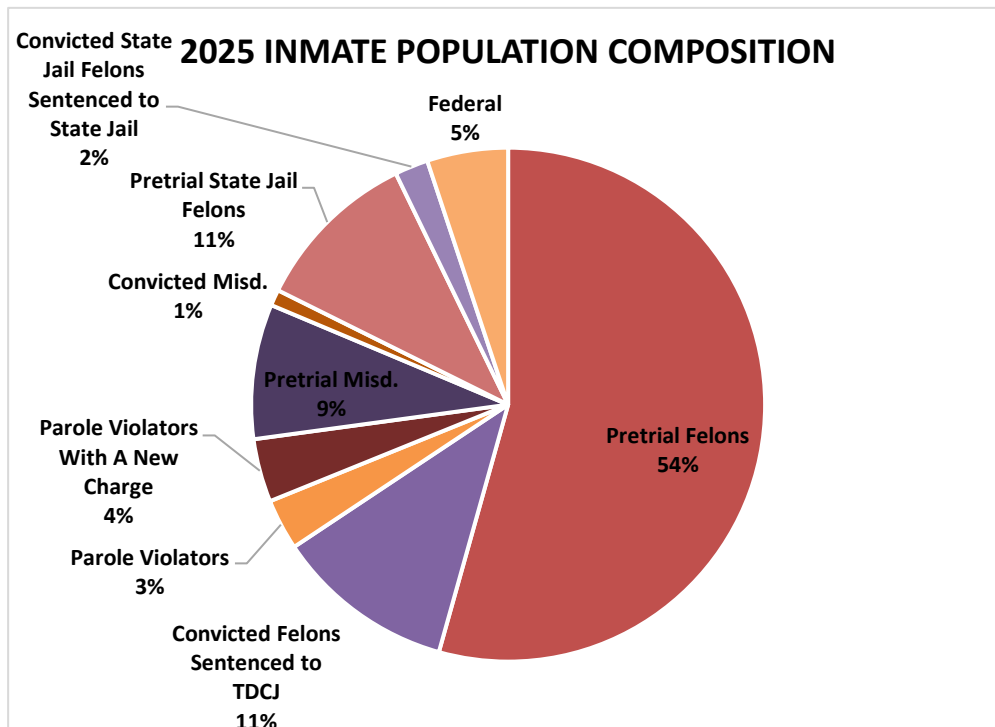
Municipalities continued to request information and assistance on jail construction or renovation. Although municipal jails that are not operated privately under authority of Local Government Code Chapter 351 are not required to conform to Texas Minimum Jail Standards, municipalities continue to show confidence in the Commission to provide them unbiased information and guidance upon which to base decisions concerning construction or operation.

## **C. Auditing**

### **1. Population**

Per Government Code Section 511.0101, all counties are required to report the total number of inmates housed in their facility and the total number of inmates housed in another facility on the first day of the month. Per the information reported to The Commission by the counties, it was determined that, on average, in 2025, Texas county jails collectively operated at 74% capacity and housed approximately 72,017 inmates at a given time.

Below is a further breakdown of the average composition of local and contract inmates housed in Texas County Jails in 2025:



*\*This representation does not include all offense categories so totals may not equal 100%.*

Approximately 8% of the inmates housed in Texas County jails in 2025 were held on a contract basis for either another county jail in Texas, a federal agency such as the US Marshals Service, or another state.

## 2. Immigration

Senate Bill (SB) 1698, 82nd Legislature, requires each county to report the number of inmates with immigration detainers and the associated cost each month. From January 2025 to December 2025, county jails and Operation Lonestar Units reported 32,355 inmates with immigration detainers in their facilities. The total cost to house these inmates with immigration detainers during this period was \$189,343,921.92. Below is a monthly breakdown of these totals:

JANUARY 2025 - DECEMBER 2025 MONTHLY IMMIGRATION TOTALS				
Reporting Period	Number of Inmates	Number of Inmate Days	Average Cost Per Day	Total Monthly Cost
Jan-25	7048	169993	\$ 92.32	\$ 15,693,441.25
Feb-25	7573	157808	\$ 91.33	\$ 14,412,270.30
Mar-25	7875	173792	\$ 91.32	\$ 15,869,953.18
Apr-25	7863	167861	\$ 91.09	\$ 15,289,921.99
May-25	7892	176169	\$ 90.93	\$ 16,018,719.67

Jun-25	7882	171261	\$ 91.49	\$ 15,668,156.71
Jul-25	8039	179328	\$ 90.99	\$ 16,317,175.17
Aug-25	8244	180844	\$ 90.84	\$ 16,427,395.55
Sep-25	8004	172079	\$ 91.16	\$ 15,687,316.78
Oct-25	7797	174714	\$ 93.56	\$ 16,346,115.09
Nov-25	7515	163584	\$ 94.18	\$ 15,405,720.42
Dec-25	7701	173446	\$ 93.45	\$ 16,207,735.81

*\*If you add/combine the total number of inmates each month from the chart above, it will not equal the total number of inmates with immigration detainees in Texas's county jails this year. This is because counties report the same inmate each month until they are released; thus, if an inmate was held for three months, they would be counted on three different monthly reports.*

### 3. Licensed Jailer Turnover

Senate Bill (SB) 1687, 82nd Legislature, requires county jails to report the number of licensed jailers that leave county jail employment. Throughout 2025, county jails reported that 4,313 licensed jailers left employment, making the annual licensed jailer turnover rate 31.17%. On average, approximately 359 jailers left employment each month, making the average monthly turnover rate in 2025 2.60%. This is a slight decrease from the 2024 annual jailer turnover rate of 34.17% and the average monthly turnover rate of 2.85%.

### D. Operation Lone Star

The Commission on Jail Standards was named a member of the Governor's Task Force on Border and Homeland Security upon its formation on June 10, 2021. The primary task the Commission and its staff have taken part in is supporting Operation Lone Star, which is the state effort to secure the border. Since its inception, commission staff have provided technical assistance and assisted with the establishment of two temporary processing facilities and the re-purposing of three units of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) units to serve as temporary housing for county jail inmates. This has required agency staff to assist the Texas Division of Emergency Management and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice in all aspects of county jail operations to ensure compliance. Agency staff traveled and provided onsite technical support, which included inspections for the approved temporary processing facilities (Val Verde and Jim Hogg) and three repurposed TDCJ facilities housing inmates arrested as part of Operation Lone Star. These efforts proved worthwhile when conditions of confinement and authority to hold county inmates in these re-purposed facilities were challenged in court and dismissed, allowing the operation to continue. With funding provided by Operation Lone Star, the agency has allocated two full-time equivalents to the program to carry out our inspections, resolve complaints and provide technical assistance. In 2025, utilization



of OLS - designated jail facilities declined, with border security related operations changing following the closure of the Val Verde and Jim Hogg temporary processing centers in December 2025. Border security continues with inmates being transferred to local county jails instead of state operated TDCJ facilities in efforts to control county jail populations and the agency will continue to issue variances and technical assistance as needed to support border security.

#### **E. Critical Incident Inspection**

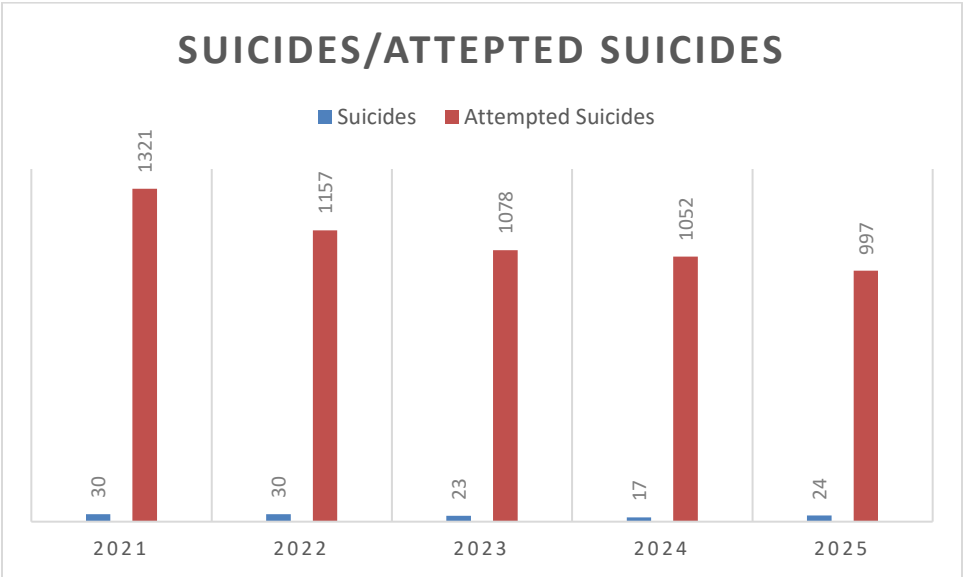
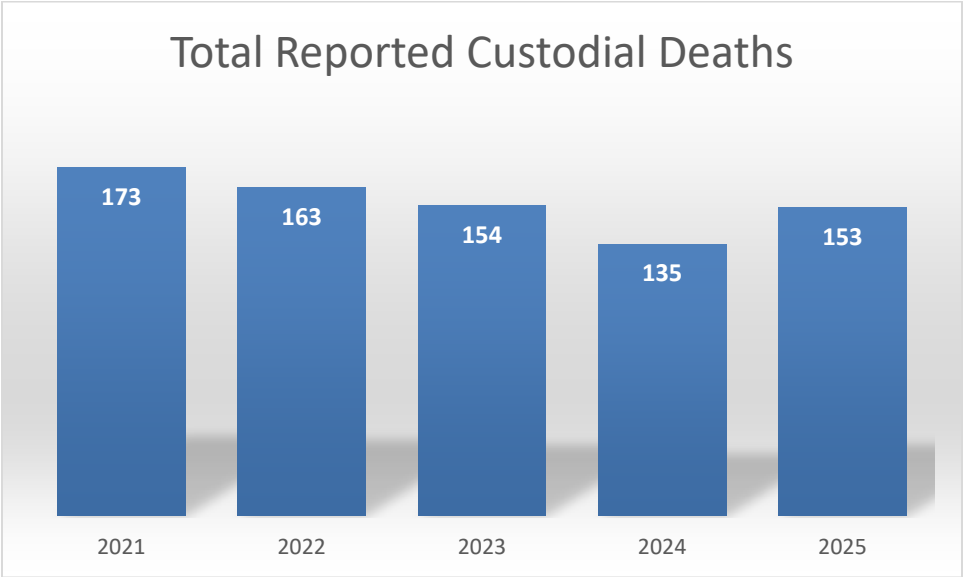
In addition to conducting administrative reviews on reported Escapes from custody and Deaths in Custody, the Commission also receives, on or before the fifth day of each month, reports on the occurrence of any serious incidents involving an inmate in the county jail during the preceding month.

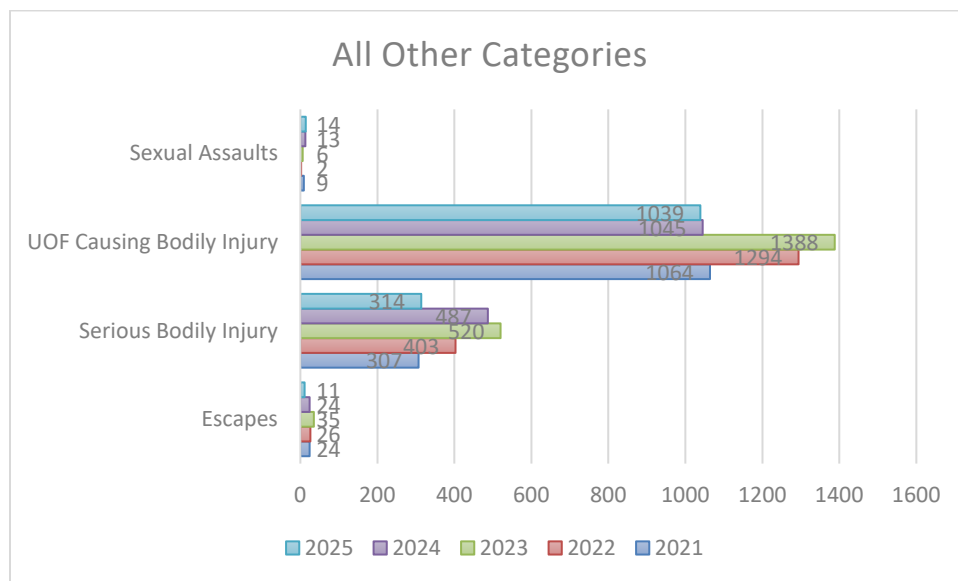
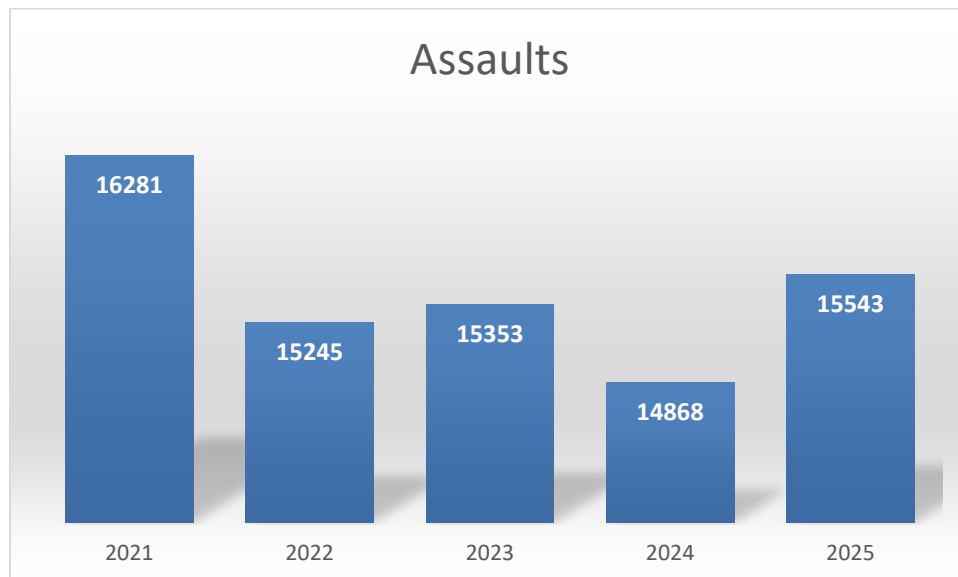
January	All facilities reporting
February	All facilities reporting
March	All facilities reporting
April	All facilities reporting
May	All facilities reporting
June	All facilities reporting
July	All facilities reporting
August	All facilities reporting
September	All facilities reporting
October	All facilities reporting
November	All facilities reporting
December	All facilities reporting

<b>Critical Incident Issue</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Sexual Assault	9	2	6	13	14
Suicide	30	30	23*	17	24
Escape	24	26	35	24	11
Death	143	133*	131	118*	129*
Serious Bodily Injury	307	403	520	487	314
Attempted Suicide	1321	1157	1078	1052	997
UOF Resulting in Bodily Injury	1064	1294	1388	1045	1039
Assault	16281	15245	15353	14868	15543

\*Out of state deaths of Texas County Jail inmates were added to database

The total number of reported incidents are outlined below by order of frequency:





## F. Jail Administrator Examination

SB 1849 amended Government Code 511 and requires that an individual appointed to the position of Jail Administrator after March 1, 2018, must satisfy the requirements of a Jail Administrator Examination created by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) and approved by the Commission within 180 days of his/her appointment. In an effort to ensure our stakeholders would be able to locate this requirement more easily, a new standard, §275.8 Jail Administrator Examination, was adopted.

As of December 31, 2025, 62 individuals have been appointed as jail administrators since January 1, 2025. Of those 62 individuals, 60 successfully passed the Jail Administrator Examination, and the two remaining Jail Administrators have not surpassed the 180 days allowed to pass the exam and meet the requirement.

## **G. Additional Services**

### **1. Research**

In 2025, the Commission received approximately 482 public information requests. This is a decrease from the 523 public information requests the Commission received in 2024. The most frequently requested information were death in custody reports (51%), inspection reports (20%), and copies of complaints regarding county jails (9%).

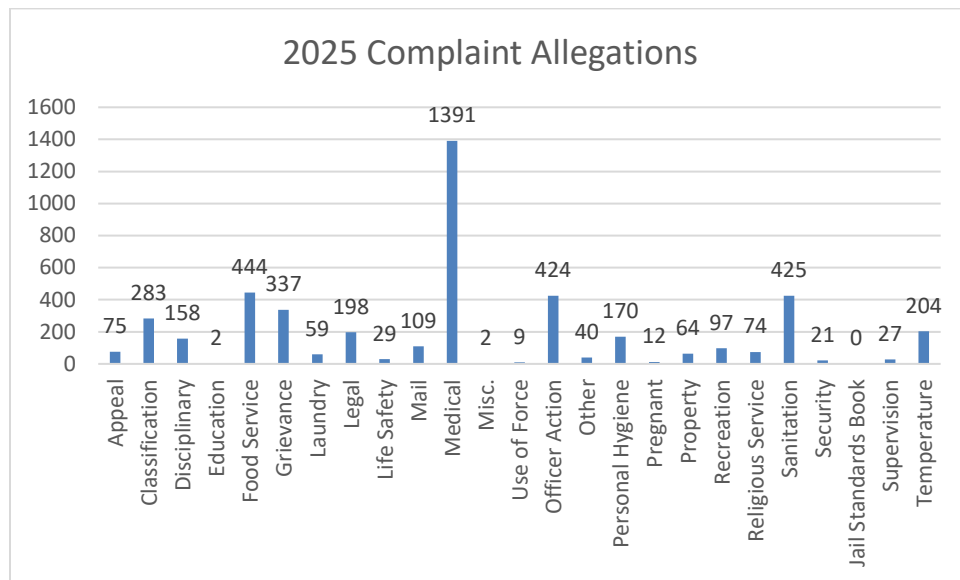
In 2025, The Commission requested 57 Attorney General rulings regarding the release of information. This is approximately less than half the number of Attorney General rulings The Commission requested in 2024. The most common reason TCJS requested to withhold information was that the release of the information would interfere with the status of an ongoing criminal investigation, prosecution, or pending/anticipated litigation.

### **2. Inmate Complaints**

The Commission received 4,335 written requests for inmate assistance or complaint review. This is an increase of approximately 0.65% from 2024. Of these complaints, 2,913 required a written response by county officials and possible action by Commission staff. The Commission determined that 57 (1.31%) of complaints requiring a response were founded. Medical services constituted 32.09% of complaints received, making this category the most frequently cited complaint requiring a formal reply.

The following graph illustrates the frequencies of complaints received for 26 categories. In cases where more than one complaint category is addressed in a letter, the three most significant complaints are reported in their respective categories.

Of the 4,335 complaints received, 1,422 did not require a response from county officials, were beyond the purview of the Commission or were returned to the sender with instructions to utilize the facility's established jail grievance system. Inquiry into the remainder of the requests either alleviated conditions in need of correction or established the lack of truth in the allegations and thus helped eliminate frivolous litigation.



### 3. Variances

The Commission approved six (6) new variances and seventeen (17) extensions of a previously granted variance. Additionally, the Variance Sub-Committee was disbanded by the Commission at the May 2025 meeting. Variance requests apply to any county experiencing overcrowding or design constraints that seek a variance from Minimum Jail Standards after the agenda for the next regularly scheduled Commission meeting has been posted. Each request is individually reviewed and acted upon by the Commission during its four quarterly meetings. (The Commission may grant reasonable variances, except that no variance may be granted to permit unhealthy, unsanitary, or unsafe conditions).

## V. Administrative Activity in Review

### A. Staff Changes

During 2025, three (3) new hires joined the Commission.

### B. Staff Turnover

During 2025, two (2) staff members left the Commission in retirement.

### C. Training Initiatives

Commission staff has continued to select timely topics and develop a solid curriculum for the training programs first developed in 2001, as evidenced by the positive response all training sessions have received.

We are happy to be teaching “Current Trends and High-Impact Areas of Jail Operations and objective jail classification “again in 2025. The field inspectors have

conducted eight (8) classes in various areas across the state with practitioners who are widely regarded as experts in their field of jail management who also served as instructors for this training alongside Commission staff using materials prepared by the agency. This program not only educates those attending the training but also develops the presentation and leadership skills of the instructors themselves.

Since creating and maintaining a validated classification system remains an essential part of county jail management, Objective Jail Classification training by Commission staff continues to be offered to the counties, both on-site and at headquarters. In addition, Commission staff continue to offer training on-site and at headquarters for Population and Paper-Ready Reports and the Pregnant Inmate Report training for any county that requests assistance.

In addition to these training classes, the Commission conducted training sessions at the annual Texas Jail Association (TJA) Conference in San Marcos, Texas, the National Jail Leadership Command Academy at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, the Sheriff's Association Conference in Fort Worth, Texas, the Jail Management issues Conference in Galveston, Texas, the CMIT Mental Health Conference in Austin, Texas, the Jail Administration Management and Operations classes at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, and at the Judges and Commissioners' Conference.

Throughout 2025, the agency continued to provide Suicide Prevention Training for Jailers, TCOLE class #4901, which it developed in 2019. The objective of this class is to help jailers identify inmates who are a suicide risk and provide them with the questions and actions necessary to help prevent suicide attempts. This class is also intended to help counties satisfy annual training requirements.

HB 2831, 87th Legislature, amended the Occupations Code, 1701.269 to require the Commission and TCOLE, by December 31, 2021, to develop a four (4) hour training (TCOLE Course 2831) for county jail personnel on interactions with persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities who is confined to a county jail. The training program was developed for both classroom instruction and online training. The classroom version continues to be offered as regional trainings by the Commission throughout the state.

SB 1563, 89th Legislature, amended the Occupations Code, 1701.273 to require TCOLE, in consultation with the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), to develop a training program for county jailers on interacting with veterans in the criminal justice system. The Mental Health Trainer assisted TCOLE and TVC in the research and development of the curriculum and has begun scheduling regional trainings throughout the state.

The Mental Health Trainer conducted 69 training classes with a total of 741 participants in attendance. Additionally, the Mental Health Trainer conducted trainings at the Texas Jail Association Jail Management Issues conference and at the Management Institute of Texas (CMIT) Mental Health Conference.

The agency collaborated with CMIT to revitalize the Jail Mental Health Officer (JMHO) TCOLE 5900 course. This course was developed in 2017 as a mental health and de-escalation certification course for jailers. The objective is to provide certification in accordance with Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 1701.404. The Mental Health Trainer acts in the capacity of lead instructor for the instructor development program (Master Trainer Program) and conducts annual trainings.

The Mental Health Trainer assisted in presenting five (5) JMHO classes.

#### **D. Legislative Actions**

##### **SB8**

Amends Title 7, Government Code, by adding Chapter 753, which states that by December 1, 2026, each county that operates a jail (or contracts with a private vendor to operate the jail) shall enter into a 287(g) agreement with ICE. If a county requests to enter into an agreement but is denied, they shall request to enter into an agreement at least once a year after each denial. The Sheriff must also annually provide proof to the Attorney General of their attempt to enter into a 287(g) agreement.

There are three different 287(g) models/types: the Task Force Model, the Jail Enforcement Model, and the Warrant Service Officer. SB8 does **NOT** specify which 287(g) model the county must enter into an agreement for and counties may choose any of the three models. For more information regarding each model type, participating in the ICE 287(g) program, requirements, and how to complete the necessary forms, please visit <https://www.ice.gov/identify-and-arrest/287g> or contact ICE at [ERO287g@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:ERO287g@ice.dhs.gov)

In addition, the comptroller will be administering a grant program to support counties participating in 287(g) agreements. The funding amounts will be based on the county's population:

- \$80,000 for a county with a population of 99,999 or less.
- \$100,000 for a county with a population of 100,000 - 499,999
- \$120,000 for a county with a population of 500,000 - 999,999; and
- \$140,000 for a county with a population of one million or more.

Grant funds shall only be used to pay the costs that the federal government does **NOT** reimburse. Grant money may be spent over two years only on the following:

- *Compensation for persons performing duties under the agreement;*
- *Generating and delivering reports required by the agreement, including administrative duties required by this subchapter.*

- *Equipment and related services for peace officers and other persons related to the agreement, including the cost of repairing or replacing equipment required but not provided under the agreement.*
- *Attendance by a person at any training or other event required under the agreement;*
- *Costs to the county for confining inmates under the authority granted under the agreement and*
- *Other expenses associated with participating in the agreement as determined by the comptroller.*

A grant awarded to a Sheriff may also cover any costs incurred by the Sheriff between September 30, 2025, and January 1, 2026.

### **SB1563**

Amends Occupation Code section 1701.310(a) to require that all jailers receive training on interacting with veterans in the criminal justice system to receive a jailer's license, and any jailer who already holds a jailer's license must complete the veterans training program no later than August 31, 2027. TCOLE is responsible for developing this course, for further questions regarding this course, please contact TCOLE.

### **SB2405**

Amends Subchapter F, Chapter 499, Government Code, by adding Section 499.1214, which requires that TDCJ provide annual pen packet training for county jails/employees. The required training may be offered in person or online. For further questions regarding pen packet training, please contact TDCJ at [paperready@tdcj.texas.gov](mailto:paperready@tdcj.texas.gov).

### **HB2492**

Amends Article 17.291(b), Code of Criminal Procedure, to state that, if an inmate is charged with an offense involving family violence, the inmate **shall** be held for four hours after their bond has been posted. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

### **SB9**

Amends Article 17.021, Code of Criminal Procedure, by adding Subsections (h) and (h-1), which states that the Public Safety Report System must be configured to allow a county to integrate the public safety report system with their jail records management system (JMS) and case management system. The Office of Court Administration (OCA) office may provide grants to reimburse counties for costs related to integrating their systems. This portion of the Act takes effect January 1, 2026 and the grant expires on August 31, 2027.



Amends Article 44.01, Code of Criminal Procedure, by amending Subsections (a) and (g) and adding Subsections (f-1) and (f-2), which would allow a DA to appeal bail decisions for certain offenses if they believe bail is insufficient. A court of appeals must then review the bail decision and issue an order no later than 20 days after the appeal is filed. If the DA believes the initial bail is insufficient, the inmate must be held in county jail while the appeal is pending (which will be up to 20 days). This portion of the Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

SB9 also covers the following topics that may indirectly impact county jails; thus, we strongly recommend reading SB9 in its entirety:

- Defendants with certain charges and conditions cannot be released on bail in counties with a magistrate appointed under [Gov. Code Chapter 54](#)
- Magistrate's cannot modify bail.
- Inmates released on bail and rearrested in another county.
- Charitable bail organization reporting requirements being shifted from the Sheriff to The Office of Court Administration
- Inmates charged with a felony may not be released on bail unless they have appeared before the magistrate and the magistrate has considered the public safety report prepared for the defendant.
- Defendants who plea guilty for certain offenses punishable as a felony of the second degree or higher are required to be taken into custody and confined until the defendant is sentenced.

### [SJR 5](#)

On November 4, 2025, voters approved Proposition 3 - SJR 5, which amends Article I, Texas Constitution, by adding Section 11d, which states:

*If a person is accused of committing one or more of the following offenses:*

*(1) murder;*

*(2) capital murder;*

*(3) aggravated assault if the person:*

*(A) caused serious bodily injury, as that term is defined by general law, to another;*

*or*

*(B) used a firearm, club, knife, or explosive weapon, as those terms are defined by general law, during the commission of the assault;*

*(4) aggravated kidnapping;*

*(5) aggravated robbery;*

*(6) aggravated sexual assault;*

*(7) indecency with a child;*

*(8) trafficking of persons; or*

*(9) continuous trafficking of persons.*

*Then bail shall be denied pending trial if the attorney representing the state demonstrates:*

*(1) by a preponderance of the evidence after a hearing that the granting of bail is insufficient to reasonably prevent the person's willful nonappearance in court; or*

*(2) by clear and convincing evidence after a hearing that the granting of bail is insufficient to reasonably ensure the safety of the community, law enforcement, and the victim of the alleged offense*

*At a hearing described by this section, a person is entitled to be represented by counsel.* Therefore, counties will be required to provide counsel at an inmate's first appearance if they are charged with any of the specific offenses listed above.

This act went into effect on November 14, 2025.

#### **SB1164**

Amends Section 573.001(a), Health and Safety Code, to make it easier to place an emergency detention order (EDO) and take a person into custody by adding that a peace officer, without a warrant, may take a person into custody, regardless of the age of the person, if the officer has reason to believe that the person has mental illness and because of their mental illness:

- Demonstrates severe emotional distress and deterioration in the person's mental condition; or
- Demonstrates an inability to recognize symptoms or appreciate the risks and benefits of treatment;
- is likely without immediate detention to suffer serious risk of harm or to inflict serious harm on another person; and
- there is not sufficient time to obtain a warrant before taking the person into custody.

This act takes effect September 1, 2025. This is relevant to jails as persons may be taken to a jail or similar detention facility in an extreme emergency (such as a medical facility not being available) and a person detained in a jail or a non-medical facility shall be kept separate from any person who is charged with or convicted of a crime.

#### **SB2938**

Amends Gov Code Sec. 511.009(a), which will require that Sheriffs verify each inmate's veteran status, **during the intake process**. Texas Commission on Jail Standards considers the "standard intake process" to begin upon entry to the facility and ending when the inmate is placed into housing. If an inmate is identified as a veteran, the sheriff must now provide a prepaid postcard (supplied by the Texas Veterans Commission or TVC) to allow inmates to request federal benefits. **TCJS will be required to amend TAC 265.13 "Verify Veteran Status" to conform to the change in statute.**

The sheriff must now submit **weekly** reports to the TVC, the county's veterans service officer, and any court where the inmate has charges pending, identifying each prisoner whose veteran status was verified during the previous week.

Visitation plans must be reviewed. This act requires that county jails allow for a prisoner whose veteran status has been verified appropriately to have in-person or video visitation with the veterans county service officer for the county or a peer service coordinator at no cost to the inmate. TCJS will publish amended administrative rules regarding this new requirement. These visits shall not be counted against the inmate's minimum allowed visits. **TCJS will be required to amend TAC 291.4 "Visitation Plan" to conform to the change in statute.**

The sheriff must also ensure that the inmate's veteran status is included in the documentation provided to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) when transferring an inmate to TDCJ's custody.

**The act takes effect September 1, 2025. TCJS will publish rules for public comment and adoption of these rule changes which is expected to go into effect December 2025.**

#### **SB746**

Amends 1002.013 Estates Code to include "or proposed ward" in the definition of "guardian ad litem". SB 746 refines guardian ad litem duties and clarifies court procedures to better protect wards. TCJS is reviewing 273.2 Health Services Plan and 291.4 Visitation, which both include references to guardianship, and may be required to amend administrative rules to comply with this bill.

#### **SB2581**

Repeals Section 351.04155, Local Government Code, "Commissary Operation by Sheriff in Certain Counties," which only applies to **DALLAS AND TARRANT COUNTY.** This act takes effect September 1, 2025.

## **VI. Summary & Forecast**

*In 2025, the Texas Commission on Jail Standards advanced its mission of ensuring safe and compliant county jail operations through the continued implementation of its risk-based inspection framework and expanded technical support to local jurisdictions. Over the course of the year, the agency conducted 347 unannounced inspections, which contributed to a compliance rate of 94.51 percent, an improvement over the previous year despite increased scrutiny applied to high-risk facilities. Although 13 jails remained noncompliant at the end of the year, affected counties generally responded proactively to corrective directives, and six remedial orders were issued to prompt the timely resolution of deficiencies. The statewide capacity expanded by 664 beds through new construction and major renovations, while an additional 1,356 beds were in the planning or active construction stages*

for expected delivery in 2026. The average statewide jail population remained stable at approximately 72,017 inmates, representing 74 percent of total capacity, and counties collectively incurred more than \$189 million in costs associated with detaining individuals subject to immigration detainers.

Operationally, the agency saw continued improvement in staffing stability. Staff turnover remained low, with only two employees departing out of 28 total positions, both due to retirement. This stability contributed to a more consistent workforce and supported continuity in agency training and inspection activities.

Jail staffing trends also improved, as licensed jailer turnover fell to 31.17 percent from the prior year's 34.17 percent. Safety-related indicators showed mixed results: suicides increased, escapes declined, assaults rose modestly, and serious bodily injury incidents decreased. The agency delivered a wide range of training programs, including suicide prevention, mental health response, and jail operations curriculum, and conducted more than 260 on site management consultations with county officials. It also processed more than 4,300 inmate complaints, with medical concerns representing the most common category.

Throughout 2025, legislative mandates significantly shaped the Commission's workload and priorities. In addition to newly required veteran status verification and expanded visitation requirements for confirmed veterans, the Legislature assigned the agency two major research responsibilities: a comprehensive Pregnant Inmate Study examining conditions, care practices, and compliance across Texas jails, and a CCQ Data Study analyzing Continuity of Care Query results to assess accuracy, timeliness, and operational impacts statewide. These assignments reflect an expanding expectation that the Commission not only enforces standards but also serves as a data-driven policy resource for the state.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Commission is positioned for steady operational performance and incremental improvement. Compliance rates are projected to remain strong, likely reaching or exceeding 95 percent as counties further adapt to the risk-based inspection model and the numerous rule changes adopted in 2025. Jail populations are expected to remain relatively stable overall but may increase in larger jurisdictions due to bail-related reforms and the implementation of constitutional changes that restrict release for serious offenses. Staff stability is expected to continue, with agency turnover remaining low and statewide jailer turnover showing gradual improvement as training efforts expand. The construction pipeline for 2026 is anticipated to add new beds, easing pressure on some facilities while supporting long-term capacity planning across the state. Operational priorities will continue to focus on life-safety readiness, suicide-prevention practices, mental-health response, and the effective integration of veteran verification procedures. The agency will also dedicate substantial effort to completing the legislative mandated Pregnant Inmate study and CCQ data studies, both of which are likely to influence policy, training, and operational standards in future years.

Overall, 2026 is expected to be a year of strengthened compliance, modest population fluctuation, expanding facility capacity, and increased analytical responsibilities as the Commission continues to support counties in meeting the evolving statewide standards and legislative directives.