

3. Classification Plan Checklist

Rules [271.1](#), [271.2](#), [271.3](#), [271.4](#), [271.6](#), [271.7](#)

[Rule §271.1](#) Objective Classification Plan

- (a) Each sheriff/operator shall develop and implement an objective classification plan approved by the Commission by January 1, 1997. The plan shall include principles, procedures, instruments and explanations for classification assessments, housing assignments, reassessments and inmate needs. Plans utilizing an approved objective classification system shall be submitted and approved by the Commission. The following principles and procedures shall be addressed:
 - (1) inmates shall be **classified and housed** in the **least restrictive housing available** without jeopardizing staff, inmates or the public, **utilizing risk factors** which include any or all of the following:
 - (A) current offense or conviction;
 - (B) offense history;
 - (C) escape history;
 - (D) institutional disciplinary history;
 - (E) prior convictions;
 - (F) alcohol and/or drug abuse; and *(not included in Decision Tree)*
 - (G) stability factors.
 - (2) classification **criteria shall not include** **race, ethnicity or religious preference**;
 - (3) custody levels and special housing needs shall be assessed to include **minimum, medium and maximum custody levels** and the placement and release of inmates to and from **special units** including protective custody, administrative separation, disciplinary separation and mental and medical health housing including **known pregnant inmates**;
 - (4) **minimum** and **maximum** custody level inmates **shall** be **housed separately**. All other custody level inmates **should** be housed separately. When under **direct, visual supervision**, inmates of different custody levels **may simultaneously participate** in work and program activities;
 - (5) **juveniles** shall be separated by sight and sound from adults in accordance with the Family Code, §51.12;
 - (6) **female inmates** shall be **separated** by sight and sound from **male inmates**. When under **direct, visual and proximate supervision**, males and females **may simultaneously participate** in work and program activities;
 - (7) when housed together and separately from all other inmates, **contracted TDCJ-ID and federal inmates** may be classified solely by approved TDCJ-ID and federal classification policies and procedures, respectively. Housing units for contracted TDCJ-ID and federal inmates shall be approved by TDCJ-ID and federal officials, respectively, to ensure that the inmates' custody level does not exceed the construction security level of the assigned housing;
 - (8) the following shall apply to **prisoners in transit**:

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- (A) an inmate is a prisoner in transit if the agency charged with the custody of the inmate is **transporting the inmate** from one jail or detention facility to another jail or detention facility;
- (B) when housed together and separately from all other inmates, prisoners in transit transported by another agency may be **temporarily housed in a facility** if the transporting agency provides a **written statement** that the prisoners can be **safely housed together**;
- (C) when housed they **shall** be confined in **maximum construction level housing**;
- (D) **females** shall be **separated** by sight and sound from **males**;
- (E) **observation** shall be performed **at least every 30 minutes**;
- (F) they **shall not** be held in a facility for **more than 48 consecutive hours**;
- (G) the facility providing temporary housing is **not required to check** prisoners in transit against the Department of State Health Services' CCQ system **to determine** if the prisoner has **previously received state mental healthcare**; and
- (H) a transporting agency **may** include a **private correctional company** engaged in the transportation of prisoners;
- (9) persons assigned to a **detoxification cell** shall be transferred to a housing or holding area as soon as they can **properly care for themselves**;
- (10) the status of persons confined to a **violent cell** shall be **reassessed** and documented **at least every 24 hours** for continuance of status;
- (11) inmates who require protection or those who require separation to protect the safety and security of the facility may be housed in **administrative separation**. The status of inmates placed in administrative separation shall be **reviewed** and documented **at least every 30 days** for continuance of status. Inmates housed in administrative separation shall **retain access to services and activities**, **unless** the continuance of the services and activities would adversely affect the safety and security of the facility; and
- (12) **single cells** may be utilized for **disciplinary** or **administrative separation**. Inmates in **administrative separation** shall be provided **access to a day room** for at least **one hour** each day. Inmates in **disciplinary separation** shall be provided a **shower every other day**.
- (b) The following **classification procedures** shall be conducted utilizing the **approved classification instruments**.
 - (1) **Intake Screening**. To be completed **immediately** on all inmates admitted for purposes of identifying any **medical, mental health or other special needs** that require placing inmates in **special housing units**;
 - (2) **Initial Custody Assessment**. To be completed on all **newly admitted inmates** prior to housing assignments to **determine custody levels**.

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- (3) **Custody Reassessment/Review**. A custody reassessment shall be conducted **within 30 - 90 days of the Initial Custody Assessment** and **immediately** upon any disciplinary action and/or **change in legal status** which would affect classification. A documented **classification review** to determine the necessity for a complete reassessment shall be conducted **every 30 - 90 days thereafter**.
- (c) A **Needs Assessment Instrument** **may** be used to assess the needs and qualifications of inmates for participation in vocational, educational, mental health, substance abuse and other treatment or work programs.

[Rule §271.2](#) Housing Scheme

- Each sheriff/operator shall establish a **housing scheme** designating the construction security level (**minimum, medium, maximum**) of each facility, housing unit and bed. **Custody level assignments shall not exceed the construction security level.**

[Rule §271.3](#) Training

- The plan shall provide that **all staff whose duties include classification**, shall undergo **at least four hours of training** on the
 - (1) principles,
 - (2) procedures and instruments for classification assessments,
 - (3) housing assignments,
 - (4) reassessments & inmate needs.

[Rule §271.4](#) Appeals

- The plan shall provide that a **documented appeals process** shall be provided for
 - (1) classification assessments,
 - (2) reassessments,
 - (3) housing,
 - (4) work & program assignments.

[Rule §271.6](#) Records

- Records shall be maintained** on classification assessments, housing, work and program assignments, reassessments and appeals.

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[Rule §271.7](#) Audit

- The plan shall provide that an **annual, internal audit** shall be conducted on the classification system. Audit **records shall be maintained** for Commission review. The audit shall **assess** the following **features of the objective classification system**:
 - (1) inmates are **classified prior to placement** in inmate housing;
 - (2) inmates are **housed according to their assigned custody levels**;
 - (3) the **override rate is acceptable**; and
 - (4) **classification instruments** are **completed** in an **accurate** and **timely manner**.

Notes:

- **Disclaimer:** The **bolded**, underlined, and/or **red** sections identify areas that most commonly require revision. However, **all provisions of the standard remain mandatory**, regardless of formatting or emphasis.
- Anything in **blue** is a **hyperlink** that can be clicked on to view pertinent info.
- It is helpful to preserve as much of the language in the standards as possible.
- (a) 1 - Two approved objective classification systems. Must pick Decision Tree (6 factors) or Point-Additive (7 factors). Alcohol & drugs not included in the decision tree.
- (a) 5 - This standard must be included in the plan. Need a plan for separating 16 year-olds (certified as adults) from the adult population. Still considered juveniles from a classification standpoint and must be separated from the adult population. 17 year-olds are considered adults and can be housed with the adult population.
- (a) 9 - Only include if you have detoxification cells.
- (a) 10 - Only include if your facility has violent cells.
- (a) 3 & (b) 1 - Be sure to also specifically identify **mental health** & **pregnancy** as well
- (b) 1 - Must be done **'immediately'**.
- (b) 2 - Must be completed within 48 hours.
- Audits
 - Must be classified prior to placement / within 48 hours.
 - Override rate - up to 15% is acceptable.
- Inmates will be classified by the gender assigned at birth.
 - [TA Memo December 2025: SB8 89\(2\) Bathroom utilization determined by biological sex](#)