



U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Office of Professional Responsibility
ICE Inspections
Washington, DC 20536-5501

**Office of Detention Oversight
Follow-Up Compliance Inspection**

**Enforcement and Removal Operations
ERO Harlingen Field Office**

**Rio Grande Detention Center
Laredo, Texas**

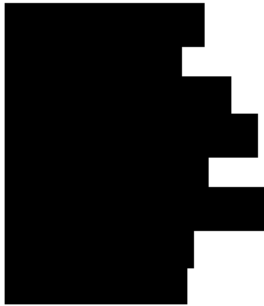
July 19-21, 2022

FOLLOW-UP COMPLIANCE INSPECTION
of the
RIO GRANDE DETENTION CENTER
Laredo, Texas

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FOLLOW-UP COMPLIANCE INSPECTION TEAM MEMBERS



Team Lead	ODO
Inspections and Compliance Specialist	ODO
Inspections and Compliance Specialist	ODO
Contractor	Creative Corrections
Contractor	Creative Corrections
Contractor	Creative Corrections
Contractor	Creative Corrections
Contractor	Creative Corrections

FACILITY OVERVIEW

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) Office of Detention Oversight (ODO) conducted a follow-up compliance inspection of the Rio Grande Detention Center (RGDC) in Laredo, Texas, from July 19 to 21, 2022.¹ This inspection focused on the standards found deficient during ODO’s last inspection of RGDC from December 13 to 16, 2021. The facility opened in 2008 and is owned and operated by The Geo Group, Inc. (GEO). The ICE Office of Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) began housing detainees at RGDC in 2014 under the oversight of ERO’s Field Office Director in Harlingen (ERO Harlingen). The facility operates under the Performance-Based National Detention Standards (PBNDS) 2008.

ERO does not have any staff assigned to the facility. A facility administrator handles daily facility operations and manages [REDACTED] support personnel. GEO provides food services and medical care, and Keefe Commissary Network provides commissary services at the facility. In June 2019, RGDC was accredited by the American Correctional Association and the National Commission on Correctional Health Care in November 2020.

Capacity and Population Statistics	Quantity
ICE Bed Capacity ²	[REDACTED]
Average ICE Population ³	[REDACTED]
Adult Male Population (as of July 18, 2022)	[REDACTED]
Adult Female Population (as of July 18, 2022)	[REDACTED]

During its last inspection, in Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, ODO found four deficiencies in the following areas: Correspondence and Other Mail (2) and Funds and Personal Property (2).

¹ This facility holds male detainees with low, medium-low, and high security classification levels for periods greater than 72 hours.

² Data Source: ERO Facility List as of July 18, 2022.

³ *Ibid.*

FOLLOW-UP COMPLIANCE INSPECTION PROCESS

ODO conducts oversight inspections of ICE detention facilities with an average daily population of 10 or more detainees, and where detainees are housed for longer than 72 hours, to assess compliance with ICE National Detention Standards. These inspections focus solely on facility compliance with detention standards that directly affect detainee life, health, safety, and/or well-being. In FY 2021, to meet congressional requirements, ODO began conducting follow-up inspections at all ICE ERO detention facilities, which ODO inspected earlier in the FY.⁴

While follow-up inspections are intended to focus on previously identified deficiencies, ODO will conduct a complete review of several core standards, which include but are not limited to Medical Care, Hunger Strikes, Suicide Prevention, Food Service, Environmental Health and Safety, Emergency Plans, Use of Force and Restraints/Use of Physical Control Measures and Restraints, Admission and Release, Classification, and Funds and Personal Property. ODO may decide to conduct a second full inspection of a facility in the same FY based on additional information obtained prior to ODO's arrival on-site. Factors ODO will consider when deciding to conduct a second full inspection will include the total number of deficiencies cited during the first inspection, the number of deficient standards found during the first inspection, the completion status of the first inspection's uniform corrective action plan (UCAP), and other information ODO obtains from internal and external sources ahead of the follow-up compliance inspection. Conditions found during the inspection may also lead ODO to assess new areas and identify new deficiencies or areas of concern should facility practices run contrary to ICE standards. Any areas found non-compliant during both inspections are annotated as "Repeat Deficiencies" in this report.

⁴ ODO reviews the facility's compliance with selected standards in their entirety.

FINDINGS BY PERFORMANCE-BASED NATIONAL DETENTION STANDARDS 2008 MAJOR CATEGORIES

PBNDs 2008 Standards Inspected ^{5, 6}	Deficiencies
Part 1 - Safety	
Emergency Plans	0
Environmental Health and Safety	0
Sub-Total	0
Part 2 - Security	
Admission and Release	0
Classification System	0
Facility Security and Control	0
Funds and Personal Property	0
Special Management Units	0
Staff-Detainee Communication	0
Use of Force and Restraints	0
Sub-Total	0
Part 4 - Care	
Food Service	0
Hunger Strikes	0
Medical Care	1
Sub-Total	1
Part 5 - Activities	
Correspondence and Other Mail	0
Recreation	0
Telephone Access	0
Sub-Total	0
Part 6 - Justice	
Grievance System	0
Sub-Total	0
Other Standards Reviewed	
PBNDs 2011 (Errata 2013) Significant Self-harm and Suicide Prevention and Intervention	0
Sub-Total	0
Total Deficiencies	1

⁵ For greater detail on ODO's findings, see the *Follow-up Compliance Inspection Findings* section of this report.

⁶ Beginning in FY 2022, ODO instituted a process of rotating all standards on a 3-year basis. As a result, some standard components may not be present in all standards.

DETAINEE RELATIONS

ODO interviewed 25 residents, who each voluntarily agreed to participate. None of the detainees made allegations of discrimination, mistreatment, or abuse. Most detainees reported satisfaction with the facility services except for the concerns listed below.

Admission and Release: Three Haitian detainees stated they cannot fully comprehend the Spanish translations of the ICE National Detainee Handbook and facility specific handbook issued to them and requested both handbooks in Haitian Creole.

- Action Taken: ODO interviewed the assistant facility administrator and found the Haitian detainees stated they understood Spanish and signed acknowledgment forms for the receipt of the Spanish translation for both handbooks. At ODO's request, the facility issued the detainees copies of the handbooks in Haitian Creole on July 20, 2022. ODO observed facility staff issuing the Haitian Creole translations of the handbooks to the detainees.

Food Service: One detainee stated the facility does not serve him medical diet trays for his diabetes, and the regular food trays make him sick.

- Action Taken: ODO interviewed the health service administrator (HSA) and the food service director, reviewed the registered dietitian's certified medical diets, and found the facility identified the detainee as diabetic during intake and prescribed an approved medical diet tray on May 31, 2022. ODO confirmed the detainee's medical diet tray and evening snack and found no formal nor verbal complaints from the detainee regarding food items for his medical diet. ODO also found the regular and medical meals prepared for the detainee population to be diverse, well-proportioned, and nutritionally adequate. The HSA advised the detainee to submit any future complaints about the food trays to her.

Grievance System: One detainee stated he would like to request a special diet for his hypertension, after realizing he could submit such a request.

- Action Taken: ODO interviewed the assistant facility administrator and verified the detainee did not identify his hypertension during intake and never requested a special diet after receiving his facility specific handbook. ODO confirmed the facility issued the detainee a medical request and educated him on how to request a medical evaluation in order to receive a special diet. At the conclusion of the inspection, the detainee had not submitted a medical request.

Medical Care: One detainee stated the constant pain in his lower left leg had caused him a loss of sleep, but he had not submitted a sick call request for treatment. He also stated he injured his leg in his native country and worsened it by remaining in water for 10 days during his trek to the border.

- Action Taken: After the detainee interview on July 19, 2022, ODO immediately informed the facility medical staff of the detainee's complaint and found a nurse practitioner (NP) evaluated him and prescribed Naproxen (500 mg), twice per day, from July 20 to August 2, 2022. ODO interviewed the HSA and confirmed the detainee arrived at RGDC on May 29, 2022, and a facility medical doctor (MD) noted the detainee's history of diabetes during intake on May 31, 2022, and later confirmed the detainee is diabetic. The detainee stated he had surgery on his left shin in his native country in February 2022, and the surgeon prescribed him pain medication. Though the detainee found his left leg could bear weight, he stated he purchased crutches prior to entering ICE custody because he did not receive adequate rehabilitation when he first injured his leg. ODO observed the detainee using his crutches during the inspection. After the detainee's initial evaluation, the MD prescribed ibuprofen (800 mg), twice per day, from May 31 to July 9, 2022. On July 25, 2022, ODO confirmed the NP reevaluated the detainee and informed him of his scheduled X-ray appointment for July 27, 2022.

Medical Care: One detainee stated he submitted multiple requests for prescription eyeglasses since he lost his original pair during his arrest by ICE. The detainee stated the medical staff told him he "most likely would not get replacements." The detainee is concerned that the non-prescription reading glasses he bought at the commissary will affect his vision.

- Action Taken: ODO interviewed the HSA, reviewed the detainee's medical file, and confirmed the detainee's arrival on June 5, 2022, and his eye exam by an RN on June 14, 2022. The RN recommended reading glasses, available for purchase at the commissary. ODO found no subsequent requests submitted for eyeglasses and learned the eyeglasses the detainee lost were reading glasses and not prescription eyeglasses.

Medical Care: One detainee stated he still experiences pain near his eyes after the medical staff examined him and prescribed ibuprofen. He also stated concern about his low urine input.

- Action Taken: ODO interviewed the HSA and found the detainee submitted a sick call request on June 24, 2022, for right eye pain and headaches but nothing submitted for low urine input. On June 30, 2022, an NP evaluated the detainee, informed him stress may be the cause of his pain, and prescribed ibuprofen (200 mg), twice per day for 5 days. The NP also advised the detainee to submit another sick call request should symptoms persist. At the conclusion of the inspection, the detainee had not submitted a medical request for low urine output. ODO followed up with RGDC on the detainee's low urine output, and the HSA confirmed the detainee never submitted a medical request and was released from custody on July 26, 2022.

Medical Care: One detainee stated the medical staff has yet to evaluate him after he submitted a sick call request for a rash and acid reflux.

- Action Taken: ODO interviewed the HSA and confirmed the detainee had not submitted any sick call requests; however, a facility RN evaluated the detainee on July 19, 2022, and prescribed medication for gastric pain and pruritic rash. More specifically, the RN prescribed diphenhydramine hydrochloride (25 mg), twice per day, and Omeprazole (20 mg), one dose for one day. ODO followed up with RGDC on the detainee's medical request, and facility staff confirmed the detainee's release on July 20, 2022.

Medical Care: One detainee stated he suffers from continued and, at times, unbearable pain after the medical staff prescribed pain medication for his chest and testicular pain on July 14, 2022. The detainee also stated he has yet to receive confirmation from the staff for an X-ray appointment.

- Action Taken: ODO interviewed the HSA and confirmed the detainee arrived at RGDC on June 21, 2022, and reported pain in his left testicle and the need for surgery during intake. On June 22, 2022, an NP evaluated and prescribed Naproxen (500 mg), twice per day, from June 22 to July 7, 2022. The NP also instructed the detainee to sleep on the bottom bunk in his housing unit and scheduled him for a testicular ultrasound on July 25, 2022. ODO verified the detainee's sick call request, dated July 7, 2022, for chest pains, and after examining him, the NP prescribed two calcium antacid (500 mg) tablets the following day and one Ciprofloxacin Hydrogen Chloride, twice per day, from July 8 to July 14, 2022. On July 1, 2022, the detainee submitted a sick call request for testicular pain, an NP evaluated him on the following day with a possible diagnosis of epididymitis. The NP prescribed ibuprofen (600 mg), twice per day, from July 20 to August 9, 2022, and amoxicillin clavulanate (500 mg), twice per day from July 21 to 30, 2022. On July 20, 2022, the MD prescribed the detainee docusate sodium (100 mg), twice per day, from August 2 to 31, 2022, and doxycycline hyclate (100 mg), twice per day, from August 2 to 12, 2022. On July 20, 2022, ODO confirmed medical staff informed the detainee of his testicular ultrasound appointment for July 25, 2022.

Medical Care: One detainee stated his concern over the ineffectiveness of his prescribed medication for a rash on his arms after submitting a sick call request on or about July 11, 2022.

- Action Taken: ODO interviewed the HSA, reviewed the detainee's medical records, and confirmed an MD examined the detainee on June 4, 2022, after the detainee submitted a sick call request on June 2, 2022. The MD diagnosed tinea curis (jock itch) and prescribed a topical antifungal cream (1%) for the affected area and ibuprofen (650 mg), once per day, for 3 days. On June 9, 2022, an RN examined the detainee for dry skin and prescribed topical hydrocortisone cream (1 %) for the affected area for 5 days. The detainee submitted a sick call request for itchy skin on July 12, 2022, and the RN prescribed Zyrtec (10 mg), once per day, for 30 days. On July 21, 2022, the MD followed up with the detainee and prescribed topical ammonium terbinafine (250 mg), once per day, from July 21 to August 4, 2022.

Medical Care: One detainee stated he received no follow-up care after RGDC medical staff verified his claim of a syringe needle lodged in his arm prior to his arrival at RGDC.

- Action Taken: ODO interviewed the HSA, reviewed the detainee’s medical records, and confirmed the detainee submitted a sick call request for musculoskeletal pain on June 29, 2022. An RN evaluated the detainee on the following day and noted his statement about a syringe needle lodged in his arm from a vaccination in 2016 and experienced no pain until June 28, 2022. An NP prescribed the detainee Naproxen (500 mg) from June 30 to August 5, 2022. The NP reevaluated the detainee on July 7, 2022, and scheduled an X-ray appointment for July 9, 2022. On July 14, 2022, ICE ERO approved the detainee for an offsite surgery to remove the needle on August 29, 2022. On July 20, 2022, HSA informed the detainee of his scheduled surgery.

Staff-Detainee Communication: One detainee stated he never received a response from an ICE asylum officer after a month had passed from the time of the interview.

- Action Taken: ODO interviewed the deportation officer (DO), reviewed the communication logs between ICE officers and the detainee, and confirmed the detainee arrived at RGDC on June 5, 2022, and ERO Harlingen processed the detainee for expedited removal. The detainee communicated credible fears to a DO on June 7 and June 14, 2022. On June 15, 2022, the DO submitted the detainee’s packet to the ICE asylum office. The detainee communicated with a DO on June 21, June 28, and July 18, 2022. On July 20, 2022, the DO stated the ICE asylum office decided on the detainee’s case and mailed documents to RGDC for the detainee’s signature. On July 21, 2022, ODO verified the DO informed the detainee on the status of his case.

FOLLOW-UP COMPLIANCE INSPECTION FINDINGS

CARE

MEDICAL CARE (MC)

ODO reviewed █ detainee medical records and found in █ out of █ records, no health appraisal by the health care provider, to include a physical examination, within 14 days of the detainees’ arrival. Specifically, the health care provider completed the health appraisal, including a physical examination, 16 and 20 days after the detainees’ arrival to the facility (**Deficiency MC-92⁷**).

⁷ “Each facility’s health care provider shall conduct a health appraisal including a physical examination on each detainee within 14 days of the detainee’s arrival unless more immediate attention is required due to an acute or identifiable chronic condition, in accordance with the most recent ACA Adult Local Detention Facility standards for Health Appraisals.” See ICE PBNDS 2008, Standard, Medical Care, Section (V)(J).

CONCLUSION

During this inspection, ODO assessed the facility’s compliance with 16 standards under PBNDS 2008 and 1 standard under PBNDS 2011 (Errata 2013) and found the facility in compliance with 16 of those standards. ODO found one deficiency in one standard. ODO commends the facility staff for their responsiveness during this inspection. ODO recommends ERO Harlingen work with the facility to resolve the deficiency that remains outstanding in accordance with contractual obligations. ERO provided ODO with the UCAP for ODO’s last inspection of RGDC on March 10, 2022.

Compliance Inspection Results Compared	First FY 2022 (PBNDS 2008)/ (PBNDS 2011) (Errata 2013)	Second FY 2022 (PBNDS 2008)/ (PBNDS 2011) (Errata 2013)
Standards Reviewed	23	16/1
Deficient Standards	2	1
Overall Number of Deficiencies	4	1
Repeat Deficiencies	0	0
Areas Of Concern	0	0
Corrective Actions	0	0
Facility Rating	Superior	N/A